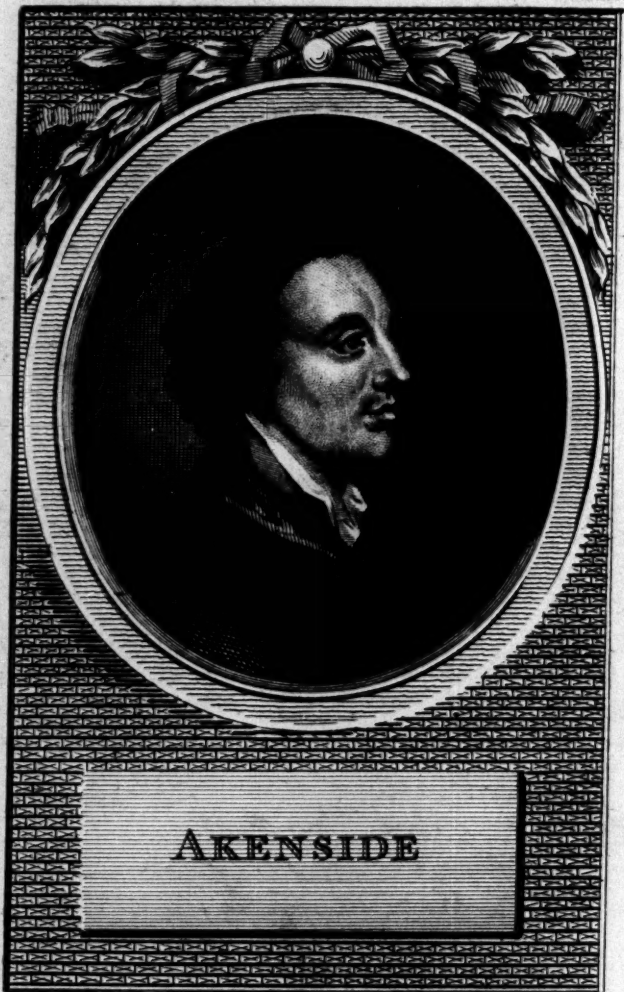
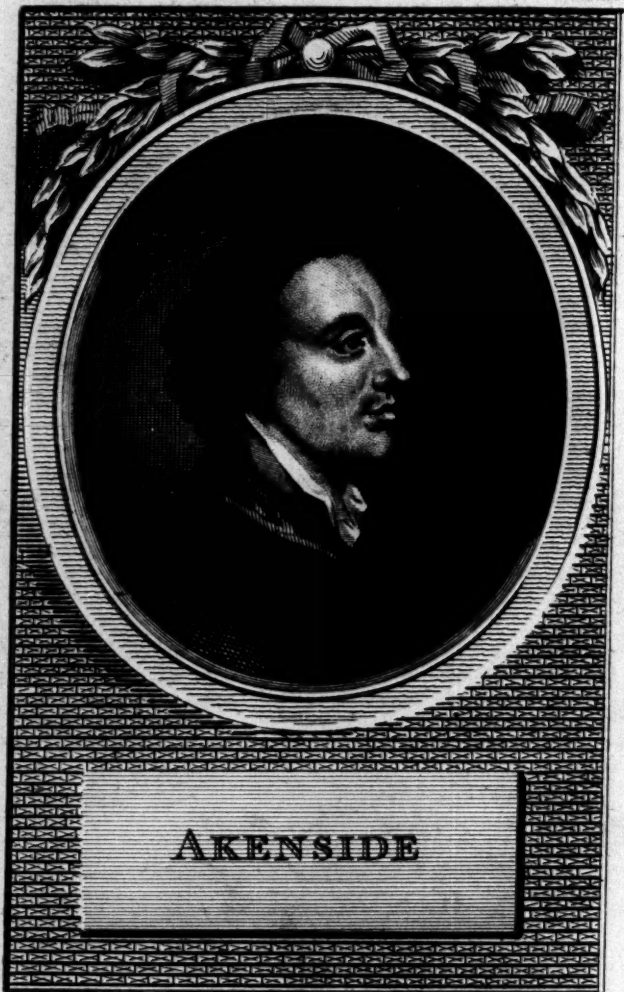




Printed for John Bell British Library Strand London Jan^y 21st 1781.



Printed for John Bell British Library Strand London Jan^y 21st 1781.

BELL'S EDITION,
The POETS of GREAT BRITAIN
COMPLETE FROM
CHAUCER to CHURCHILL.



AKENSIDE, VOL. I.
Indulgent Fancy from the fruitful Banks
Fresh flowers & dew to sprinkle on the Turf
Where Shakspeare lies.

Page 12



THE *Gal 11 Dd*
POETICAL WORKS
OF
MARK AKENSIDE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Genius of ancient Greece! whose faithful steps
Have led us to these awful solitudes
Of Nature and of Science; Nurse rever'd
Of gen'rous counsels and heroick deeds!
O let some portion of thy matchless praise
Dwell in my breast, and teach me to adorn
This unattempted theme!—Let me
With blameless hand from thy unenvied fields
Transplant some living blossoms to adorn
My native clime—while to my compatriot youth
I point the great example of thy sons,
And tune to Attick themes the British lyre.

PLEAS. OF IMAG. ENLARGED.

Come, AKENSIDE! come with thine Attick urn,
Fill'd from Ilissus by the Naiad's hand:
Thy harp was tun'd to Freedom—Strains like thine,
When Asia's lord bor'd the huge mountain's side
And bridg'd the sea, to battle rous'd the tribes
Of ancient Greece.—

ANONYM.

VOL. I.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1781.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
MARK AKENSIDE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.



VOL. II.
EDINBURGH:
AT THE PRESS OF J. B. MARRISON.
1781.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
MARK AKENSIDE.
VOL. I.

CONTAINING HIS
PLEASURES OF THE IMAGINATION,

Uc. Uc. Uc.

With what enchantment Nature's goodly scene
Attracts the sense of mortals; how the mind
For its own eye doth objects nobler fill
Prepare; how men by various lessons learn
To judge of Beauty's praise; what raptures fill
The breast with Fancy's native arts endow'd,
And what true culture guides it to renown,
My Verse unfolds. Ye Gods or godlike Pow'rs!
Ye Guardians of the sacred tale attend
Propitious: hand in hand around your Bard
Move in majestick measures, --- Be great in him,
And let your favour make him wise to speak
Of all your wondrous empire, with a voice
So temper'd to his theme that those who hear
May yield perpetual homage to yourselves.-----
O! attend, whoe'er thou art whom these delights can touch,
Whom Nature's aspect, Nature's simple garb,
Can thus command: O! listen to my Song,
And I will guide thee to her blissful walks,
And teach thy solitude her voice to hear,
And point her gracious features to thy view.

PLEAS. OF IMAG. ENLARGED.

EDINBURG:
AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.
Anno 1781.

THE MASTER OF THE IMAGINATION
CONTAINING THE
LIFE OF



**BRITISH
MUSEUM**

EDINBURGH:
At the Edinburgh of the printing
James 1811

THE LIFE OF

MARK AKENSIDE.

MARK AKENSIDE, an eminent poet and physician, was born at Newcastle upon Tyne the 9th Nov. 1721. He was second son of Mark Akenfide, a substantial butcher of that town: his mother's name was Mary Lumsden. At the freeschool of Newcastle young Akenfide received the first part of his education; he was next committed to the care of Mr. Wilfon, a dissenting clergyman who kept a private academy at Newcastle.

About the eighteenth year of his age our Author was sent to the university of Edinburgh, in the view of qualifying himself for the duties of a Presbyterian pastor, his parents and relations in general being of the Presbyterian sect. Mr. Akenfide received some assistance from the funds which the English Dissenters employ in educating young men of no opulent fortunes; but his views as to the ministry altering, he bent his studies towards physick, and honestly repaid to his benefactors the money they had advanced for him, which being contributed for a different purpose than promoting the study of physick he thought it dishonourable to retain. Whether in relinquishing his design of being a Dissenting clergyman he also ceased to be a Dissenter is not certainly known.

Akenside's genius and taste for poetry displayed themselves early when at Newcastle school, and during his continuance at Mr. Wilson's academy. His Pleasures of Imagination, with several other poems, it is said, were first written by him at Morpeth while upon a visit to his relations, and before he went to the university of Edinburgh, where he also distinguished himself by his poetical compositions. His Ode on the Winter Solstice, which is dated 1740, was certainly composed at that place.

After three years study at Edinburgh Mr. Akenside went (1741) to Leyden, where on 16th May 1744 he took his degree of Doctor in Physick. Same year appeared his Pleasures of Imagination, a poem which procured him some emolument and much reputation. This poem was followed by An Epistle to Curio, an acrimonious attack on the political conduct of William Pulteney Earl of Bath, whom he stigmatizes under the name of Curio as the betrayer of his country, also published in the 1744. Akenside dissatisfied with this performance altered it exceedingly: he converted the Epistle into an Ode, and reduced it to less than half the number of lines of which it originally consisted. In the 1745 he published his first Collection of Odes, ten in number. In 1748 came out his Ode to the Earl of Huntingdon; and in 1758 he attempted to rouse the national spirit by An Ode to the Country Gentlemen of England. Few of his re-

remaining poems were published separately, excepting the Ode to Thomas Edwards, Esq. which though written in 1751 was not printed till the year 1766. The rest of Dr. Akenfide's poems which appeared in his lifetime were given, at least for the most part, in the sixth volume of Doddsley's Collection.

Soon after his return from Leyden he commenced physician at Northampton, where Dr. Stonehouse then practised with reputation and success. Whilst here he carried on an amicable debate with Dr. Doddridge concerning the opinions of the ancient philosophers with regard to a future state of rewards and punishments, in which Dr. Akenfide supported the firm belief of Cicero in particular in this great article of natural religion. Not meeting with sufficient encouragement at Northampton, or being ambitious of a larger field in which to display his talents, he removed to Hampstead, where he resided upwards of two years, and then finally fixed himself in London.

At London he was well known as a poet, but had still to force his way as a physician. At first he had but little practice, and would probably have been reduced to difficulties had not Mr. Dyson, his intimate friend, generously allowed him 300*l.* a year, which enabled him to make a proper appearance in the world. In time the Doctor acquired considerable reputation and practice, and arrived at most of the honours incident to his profession: he became a Fellow of the Royal

Society, a Physician to St. Thomas's Hospital, was admitted by mandamus to the degree of Doctor in Physick in the university of Cambridge, and elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in London, and upon the settlement of the Queen's household was appointed one of the Physicians to her Majesty. He perhaps might have still rose to a greater elevation of character had not his studies ended with his life by a putrid fever 23d June 1770, in the 49th year of his age. He was buried in the parish of St. James's Westminster.

Dr. Akenfide was much devoted to the study of ancient literature, and was a great admirer of Plato, Cicero, and the best philosophers of antiquity. His knowledge and taste in this respect are conspicuous in his poems, and in the Notes and Illustrations which he hath annexed to them. That he had a sincere reverence for the great and fundamental principles of religion is apparent from numberless passages in his writings. His high veneration for the Supreme Being, his noble sentiments of the wisdom and benevolence of the Divine Providence, and his zeal for the cause of virtue, are conspicuous in all his poems. His regard to the Christian revelation, and his solicitude to have it preserved in its native purity, are displayed in the Ode to the Bishop of Winchester. His attachment to the cause of civil and religious liberty is a distinguished feature in the character of his poetical writ-

ings: he embraces every occasion of displaying his ardour concerning this subject; and two of his Odes, those to the Earl of Huntingdon and the Bishop of Winchester, are directly consecrated to it. *Shew*

Dr. Akenfide is to be considered as a didaetick and lyrick poet. His chief work, *The Pleasures of Imagination*, was received with great applause, and raised the Author's reputation high in the poetical world. Pope, on looking into the manuscript before publication, is reported to have said "That the Author was "no every-day writer." Mr. Cooper, in his Letters concerning Taste, speaks of Akenfide in the following strain of commendation: "For my part I am of "opinion that there is now living a poet of as genuine a genius as this kingdom ever produced, Shakespeare alone excepted. By poetical genius I do not "mean the mere talent of making verses, but that "glorious enthusiasm of soul, that fine phrensy, in "which the poet's eye rowling glances from heaven to "earth, from earth to heaven, as Shakespeare feelingly "describes it. This alone is poetry; aught else is a "mechanical art of putting syllables harmoniously together. The gentleman I mean is Dr. Akenfide, the "worthy Author of *The Pleasures of Imagination*, "the most beautiful didaetick poem that ever adorned "the English language." On the other hand the late Mr. Gray, in a letter to Mr. Wharton of Old Park near Durham, dated Peterhouse 26th April 1744,

(Mason's 4to edit. of Gray, p. 178.) says, "You desire to know, it seems, what character the poem of your young friend (Dr. Akenfide) bears here. I wonder that you ask the opinion of a nation where those who pretend to judge do not judge at all, and the rest (the wiser part) wait to catch the judgment of the world immediately above them, that is, Dick's and the Rainbow coffeehouses. Your readier way would be to ask the ladies who keep the bars in those two theatres of criticism. However, to shew you that I am a judge as well as my countrymen, I will tell you, though I have rather turned it over than read it, (Pleasures of Imagination) but no matter, no more have they, that it seems to me above the middling, and now and then, for a little while, rises even to the best, particularly in description. It is often obscure, and even unintelligible, and too much infected with the Hutchinson jargon. In short, its great fault is that it was published at least nine years too early. And so methinks, in a few words, *a la mode du Temple*, I have very prettily dispatched what perhaps may for several years have employed a very ingenious man worth fifty of myself."

"As these observations were hastily delivered in a private letter, before the poem had been maturely examined, we may be allowed (say the writers of *The Biographia*) to think them too severe, and to

“steer a middle course between Mr. Gray and Mr. Cooper. The obscurity of *The Pleasures of Imagination*, when read with attention, will chiefly be found in the allegory of the second book, which we freely confess we could never understand. It might likewise have been better if the peculiar language of Hutchinson, or rather of Shaftesbury, had sometimes been omitted. Nevertheless we cannot but regard it as a noble and beautiful poem, exhibiting many bright displays of genius and fancy, and holding out sublime views of Nature, Providence, and morality. We concur with Mr. Gray in thinking it was published too early: the Author himself became afterwards of the same sentiment: he was convinced that the poem was defective in some respects, and redundant in others.” “That it wanted revision and correction,” says Mr. Dyson, his editor, “he was sufficiently sensible; but so quick was the demand for several successive republications, that in any of the intervals to have completed the whole of his corrections was utterly impossible; and yet to have gone on from time to time in making farther improvements in every new edition would, he thought, have had the appearance at least of abusing the favour of the publick: he chose therefore to continue for some time reprinting it without alteration, and to forbear publishing any corrections or improvements until he should be able at once to

“ give them to the publick complete : and with this
“ view he went on for several years to review and
“ correct his poem at leisure, till at length he found
“ the task grow so much upon his hands, that despair-
“ ing of ever being able to execute it sufficiently to his
“ own satisfaction he abandoned the purpose of cor-
“ recting, and resolved to write the poem over anew,
“ upon a somewhat different and an enlarged plan.”

Dr. Akenfide did not live to finish the whole of his plan: that part of it which is carried into execution occurs next in this edition, and the reader may judge of the Doctor's intentions by having recourse to the General Argument prefixed to the poem. He designed at first to compromise the whole of his subject, according to a new plan, in four books; but he afterwards changed his purpose, and determined to distribute *The Pleasures of Imagination* into a greater number of books. How far his scheme would have carried him, if he had lived to complete it, is uncertain, for at his death he had only finished the first and second books, a considerable part of the third, and the introduction to the fourth. The first book of the improved work bears a nearer resemblance to the first book of the former editions than any of the rest do to each other: there are nevertheless in this book a great number of corrections and alterations, and several considerable additions. Dr. Akenfide has introduced a tribute of respect and affection to his friend Mr. Dyson: he has referred

The Pleasures of Imagination to two sources only, Greatness and Beauty, and not to three, as he had heretofore done: his delineation of beautiful objects is much enlarged; and, upon the whole, the first book seems to have received no small degree of improvement. The second book is very different from the second book of the preceding editions: the difference indeed is so great that they cannot be compared together. The Author enters into a display of Truth and its three classes, matter of Fact, experimental or scientific Truth, and universal Truth. He treats likewise of Virtue, as existing in the Divine Mind, of human virtue, of Vice and its origin, of Ridicule, and of the Passions. What he hath said upon the subject of ridicule is greatly and advantageously reduced from what it was in the former copies. The enumeration of the different sources of ridicule is left out, and consequently some lines which had given offence to Dr. Warburton. The allegorical Vision which heretofore constituted a principal part of the second book is likewise omitted. The poetical character of the second book, as it now stands, is, that it is correct, moral, and noble. The third book is an episode, in which Solon the Athenian lawgiver is the chief character; and the design of it seems to be, to shew the great influence of poetry in enforcing the cause of Liberty. This part is entirely new, and if it had been finished would have proved a beautiful addition to the poem. It is greatly to be re-

gretted that Dr. Akenfide did not live to complete his design; nevertheless we should have been sorry to have had the original poem entirely superseded. Whatever may be its faults there is in it a certain brightness and brilliancy of imagination, and a certain degree of enthusiasm, which the Doctor did not seem to have possessed in equal vigour in the latter part of his life. Years, and an application to scientific studies, appear in some measure to have turned his mind from sound to things, from fancy to the understanding.

Dr. Johnson, in his life of Akenfide, says of this poem, "It has undoubtedly a just claim to very particular notice, as an example of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquisitions, of a young mind stored with images, and much exercised in combining and comparing them." Of the altered work he adds, "He seems to have somewhat contracted his diffusion; but I know not whether he has gained in closeness what he has lost in splendour."

"To The Pleasures of Imagination," continue the authors of *The Biographia*, "succeed two books of Odes, the first containing eighteen, the second fifteen odes. It was Dr. Akenfide's intention, if he had lived, to have made each book consist of twenty odes. Those which had been formerly published are greatly altered and improved. The Doctor's odes are not equal to the beautiful productions of

“Mr Gray, nor perhaps to those of one or two living
 “writers; but still there is in them a noble vein of
 “poetry, united with manly sense, and applied to ex-
 “cellent purposes. This encomium cannot be extend-
 “ed to the whole of the odes without exception: Dr.
 “Akenfide does not always preserve the dignity of
 “the lyrick Muse: he is defective in the pathetick
 “even upon a subject which peculiarly required it,
 “and where it might have been most expected, the
 “death of his mistress, we mean his Ode to the Even-
 “ing Star. However, his Hymn to Cheerfulness, and
 “his Odes on leaving Holland, on Lyrick Poetry, to
 “the Earl of Huntingdon, and on Recovering from a
 “fit of Sickness, justly entitle him to a place among
 “the principal Lyrick writers of this country.”

“Of his Odes,” says Dr. Johnson, “nothing fa-
 “vourable can be said.—To examine such composi-
 “tions singly cannot be required; they have doubt-
 “less brighter and darker parts; but when they are
 “once found to be generally dull all further labour
 “may be spared: for to what use can the work be
 “criticised that will not be read?” In this diversity
 of opinions the reader will determine for himself.

Dr. Akenfide's principal medical performance was,
 1. His *Dissertatio de Dysenteria*, published in 1764,
 which has been commended as an elegant specimen
 of Latinity: it was twice translated into English. He
 also wrote, 2. *Observations on the Origin and Use of*

the Lymphatick Vessels in Animals. 3. An Account of a Blow on the Heart, and its Effects. 4. Oratio Anniversaria, ex Instituto Harveii, in Theatro Collegii Regalis Medicorum Londinensis habita, Anno 1759. 5. Observations on Cancers. 6. Of the Use of Ipecacuanha in Asthmas. 7. A Method of treating White Swellings of the Joints. Besides these he read at the College some Practical Observations made at St. Thomas's Hospital on the putrid Erysipelas, which he intended for the second volume of The Medical Transactions. This paper he carried home with a design to correct it, but it was not returned at the time of his death. Being appointed Cronian Lecturer he chose for his subject "The History of the Revival of Learning," and read three lectures on it before the College, but from which he soon desisted, it was supposed in disgust, some one of the College having objected that he had chosen a subject foreign to the institution. Most of the above pieces were published in The Philosophical and Medical Transactions.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE EDITION 1772.

THIS volume contains a complete collection of the poems of the late Dr. Akenfide, either reprinted from the original editions, or faithfully published from copies which had been prepared by himself for publication.

That the principal poem should appear in so disadvantageous a state may require some explanation. The first publication of it was at a very early part of the Author's life; that it wanted revision and correction he was sufficiently sensible; but so quick was the demand for several successive republications, that in any of the intervals to have completed the whole of his corrections was utterly impossible; and yet to have gone on from time to time in making farther improvements in every new edition would, he thought, have had the appearance at least of abusing the favour of the publick: he chose therefore to continue for some time reprinting it without alteration, and to forbear publishing any corrections or improvements until he should be able at once to give them to the publick complete: and with this view he went on for several years to review and correct his poem at leisure, till at length he found the task grow so much upon his hands, that despairing of ever being able to execute it sufficiently to his own satisfaction he abandoned the

purpose of correcting, and resolved to write the poem over anew upon a somewhat different and an enlarged plan : and in the execution of this design he had made a considerable progress. What reason there may be to regret that he did not live to execute the whole of it will best appear from the perusal of the plan itself, as stated in the General Argument, and of the parts which he had executed, and which are here published: for the person * to whom he intrusted the disposal of his papers would have thought himself wanting as well to the service of the publick as to the fame of his friend if he had not produced as much of the work as appeared to have been prepared for publication. In this light he considered the entire first and second books, of which a few copies had been printed for the use only of the Author and certain friends; also a very considerable part of the third book, which had been transcribed in order to its being printed in the same manner; and to these is added the introduction to a subsequent book, which in the manuscript is called the fourth, and which appears to have been composed at the time when the Author intended to comprise the whole in four books; but which, as he had afterwards determined to distribute the poem into more books, might perhaps more properly be called the last book. And this is all that is executed of

* The Right Hon. Jeremiah Dyson, by whom this Advertisement was written.

the new work, which although it appeared to the editor too valuable, even in its imperfect state, to be withholden from the publick, yet (he conceives) takes in by much too small a part of the original poem to supply its place, and to supersede the republication of it; for which reason both the poems are inserted in this Collection.

Of Odes the Author had designed to make up two books, consisting of twenty odes each, including the several odes which he had before published at different times.

The Hymn to the Naiads is reprinted from the sixth volume of Dodsley's Miscellanies, with a few corrections, and the addition of some Notes. To the Inscriptions, taken from the same volume, three new Inscriptions are added, the last of which is the only instance wherein a liberty has been taken of inserting any thing in this Collection which did not appear to have been intended by the Author for publication *, among whose papers no copy of this was found, but it is printed from a copy which he had many years since given to the editor.

* In the present edition a few pieces are added which are known to be genuine, and which certainly are no discredit to their Author.

THE DESIGN.

THERE are certain powers in human nature which seem to hold a middle place between the organs of bodily sense and the faculties of moral perception: they have been called by a very general name "The Powers of Imagination." Like the external senses they relate to matter and motion, and at the same time give the mind ideas analogous to those of moral approbation and dislike. As they are the inlets of some of the most exquisite Pleasures with which we are acquainted, it has naturally happened that men of warm and sensible tempers have sought means to recal the delightful perceptions which they afford, independent of the objects which originally produced them. This gave rise to the imitative or designing arts, some of which, as painting and sculpture, directly copy the external appearances which were admired in nature; others, as musick and poetry, bring them back to remembrance by signs universally established and understood.

But these arts as they grew more correct and deliberate were of course led to extend their imitation beyond the peculiar objects of the imaginative powers, especially poetry, which making use of language as the instrument by which it imitates, is consequently become an unlimited representative of every species and mode of being; yet as their intention was only to express the objects of Imagination, and as they still abound chiefly in ideas of that class, they of course retain their original character, and all the different

Pleasures which they excite are termed in general Pleasures of Imagination.

The Design of the following Poem is to give a view of these in the largest acceptation of the term, so that whatever our Imagination feels from the agreeable appearances of nature, and all the various entertainment we meet with either in poetry, painting, musick, or any of the elegant arts, might be deducible from one or other of those principles in the constitution of the human mind which are here established and explained.

In executing this general plan it was necessary first of all to distinguish the Imagination from our other faculties, and in the next place to characterize those original forms or properties of being about which it is conversant, and which are by nature adapted to it, as light is to the eyes, or truth to the understanding. These properties Mr. Addison had reduced to the three general classes of Greatness, Novelty, and Beauty; and into these we may analyze every object, however complex, which, properly speaking, is delightful to the Imagination. But such an object may also include many other sources of Pleasure, and its beauty, or novelty, or grandeur, will make a stronger impression by reason of this concurrence. Besides which the imitative arts, especially poetry, owe much of their effect to a similar exhibition of properties quite foreign to the Imagination, insomuch that in every line of the most applauded poems we meet with either ideas drawn from the external senses, or truths discovered

to the understanding, or illustrations of contrivance and final causes, or, above all the rest, with circumstances proper to awaken and engage the passions; it was therefore necessary to enumerate and exemplify these different species of Pleasure, especially that from the passions, which as it is supreme in the noblest work of human genius, so being in some particulars not a little surprising, gave an opportunity to enliven the didactic turn of the poem by introducing an allegory to account for the appearance.

After these parts of the subject which hold chiefly of admiration, or naturally warm and interest the mind, a Pleasure of a very different nature, that which arises from Ridicule, came next to be considered. As this is the foundation of the comick manner in all the arts, and has been but very imperfectly treated by moral writers, it was thought proper to give it a particular illustration, and to distinguish the general sources from which the ridicule of characters is derived. Here too a change of style became necessary, such a one as might yet be consistent, if possible, with the general taste of composition in the serious parts of the subject; nor is it an easy task to give any tolerable force to images of this kind without running either into the gigantick expressions of the mock heroick, or the familiar and poetical raillery of professed satire, neither of which would have been proper here.

The materials of all imitation being thus laid open, nothing now remained but to illustrate some parts

cular Pleasures which arise either from the relations of different objects one to another, or from the nature of imitation itself. Of the first kind is that various and complicated resemblance existing between several parts of the material and immaterial worlds, which is the foundation of metaphor and wit. As it seems in a great measure to depend on the early association of our ideas, and as this habit of associating is the source of many Pleasures and pains in life, and on that account bears a great share in the influence of poetry and the other arts, it is therefore mentioned here, and its effects described: then follows a general account of the production of these elegant arts, and of the secondary Pleasure, as it is called, arising from the resemblance of their imitations to the original appearances of nature: after which the work concludes with some reflections on the general conduct of the powers of Imagination, and on their natural and moral usefulness in life.

Concerning the manner or turn of composition which prevails in this piece little can be said with propriety by the Author. He had two models; that ancient and simple one of the first Grecian poets, as it is defined by Virgil in the Georgicks, and the familiar epistolary way of Horace. This latter has several advantages: it admits of a greater variety of style; it more readily engages the generality of readers, as partaking more of the air of conversation, and especially with the assistance of rhyme leads to a closer and

more concise expression. Add to this the example of the most perfect of modern poets, who has so happily applied this manner to the noblest parts of philosophy that the publick taste is in a great measure formed to it alone. Yet, after all, the subject before us, tending almost constantly to admiration and enthusiasm, seemed rather to demand a more open, pathetick, and figured style. This too appeared more natural, as the Author's aim was not so much to give formal precepts, or enter into the way of direct argumentation, as by exhibiting the most engaging prospects of nature to enlarge and harmonize the Imagination, and by that means insensibly dispose the minds of men to a similar taste and habit of thinking in religion, morals, and civil life. It is on this account that he is so careful to point out the benevolent intention of the Author of Nature in every principle of the human constitution here insisted on, and also to unite the moral excellencies of life in the same point of view with the mere external objects of good taste; thus recommending them in common to our natural propensity for admiring what is beautiful and lovely. The same views have also led him to introduce some sentiments which may perhaps be looked upon as not quite direct to the subject; but since they bear an obvious relation to it the authority of Virgil, the faultless model of didactick poetry, will best support him in this particular: for the sentiments themselves he makes no apology.

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

Ἀρετῆς μὲν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπῳ τὰς παρὰ τῷ θεῷ χάριτας
ἀτιμάζειν.

EPICT. *apud Arrian.* II. 23.

BOOK I.

The Argument.

THE subject proposed: difficulty of treating it poetically. The ideas of the Divine Mind the origin of every quality pleasing to the Imagination. The natural variety of constitution in the minds of men, with its final cause. The idea of a fine Imagination, and the state of the mind in the enjoyment of those Pleasures which it affords. All the primary Pleasures of the Imagination result from the perception of greatness, or wonderfulness, or beauty, in objects. The Pleasure from greatness, with its final cause: Pleasure from novelty or wonderfulness, with its final cause: Pleasure from beauty, with its final cause. The connexion of beauty with truth and good, applied to the conduct of life. Invitation to the study of moral philosophy. The different degrees of beauty in different species of objects; colour, shape, natural concretes, vegetables, animals; the mind. The sublime, the fair, the wonderful, of the mind. The connexion of the Imagination and the moral faculty. Conclusion.

WITH what attractive charms this goodly frame
Of Nature touches the consenting hearts
Of mortal men, and what the pleasing stores
Which beauteous imitation thence derives
To deck the poet's or the painter's toil,
My Verse unfolds. Attend, ye gentle Pow'rs
Of Musical delight! and while I sing
Your gifts, your honours, dance around my strain.
Thou, smiling queen of ev'ry tuneful breast,
Indulgent Fancy! from the fruitful banks
Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
Fresh flow'rs and dew to sprinkle on the turf.

Where Shakespeare lies, be present; and with thee
Let Fiction come, upon her vagrant wings
Wasting ten thousand colours thro' the air, 15
Which by the glances of her magick eye
She blends and shifts at will thro' countless forms,
Her wild creation. Goddess of the Lyre,
Which rules the accents of the moving sphere,
Wilt thou, eternal Harmony! descend 20
And join this festive train? for with thee comes
The guide the guardian of their lovely sports,
Majestick Truth! and where Truth deigns to come
Her sister Liberty will not be far.
Be present all ye Genii! who conduct 25
The wand'ring footsteps of the youthful bard
New to your springs and shades, who touch his ear
With finer sounds, who heighten to his eye
The bloom of Nature, and before him turn
The gayest, happiest, attitude of things. 30
Oft' have the laws of each poetick strain
The critick verse employ'd; yet still unsung
Lay this prime subject, tho' importing most
A Poet's name: for fruitless is th' attempt
By dull obedience and by creeping toil 35
Obscure to conquer the severe ascent
Of high Parnassus. Nature's kindling breath
Must fire the chosen genius; Nature's hand
Must string his nerves, and imp his eagle wings,
Impatient of the painful steep, to soar 40

High as the summit, there to breathe at large
Ethereal air with bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of praise! These flatt'ring scenes
To this neglected labour court my song;
Yet not unconscious what a doubtful task
To paint the finest features of the mind,
And to most subtle and mysterious things
Give colour, strength, and motion. But the love
Of Nature and the Muses bids explore,
Thro' secret paths erewhile untrod by man,
The fair poetick region, to detect
Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts,
And shade my temples with unfading flow'rs
Cull'd from the laureate vale's profound recess,
Where never poet gain'd a wreath before.

From Heav'n my strains begin; from Heav'n descend
The flame of genius to the human breast,
And love, and beauty, and poetick joy,
And inspiration. Ere the radiant sun
Sprang from the east, or 'mid the vault of night
The moon suspended her serener lamp,
Ere mountains, woods, or streams, adorn'd the globe,
Or Wisdom taught the sons of men her lore,
Then liv'd th' Almighty One; then deep-retir'd
In his unfathom'd essence view'd the forms,
The forms eternal, of created things;
The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
The mountains, woods, and streams, the rowling globe;

And Wisdom's mien celestial. From the first sight
 Of days on them his love divine he fix'd,
 His admiration, till in time complete
 What he admir'd and lov'd his vital smile
 Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
 Of life informing each organick frame,
 Hence the green earth and wild resounding waves,
 Hence light and shade alternate, warmth and cold,
 And clear autumnal skies and vernal show'rs,
 And all the fair variety of things.

But not alike to ev'ry mortal eye.
 Is this great scene unveil'd; for since the claims
 Of social life to diff'rent labours urge
 The active pow'rs of man, with wise intent
 The hand of Nature on peculiar minds
 Imprints a diff'rent bias, and to each
 Decees its province in the common toil.
 To some she taught the fabrick of the sphere,
 The changeful moon, the circuit of the stars,
 The golden zones of heav'n: to some she gave
 To weigh the moment of eternal things,
 Of time, and space, and Fate's unbroken chain,
 And will's quick impulse: others by the hand
 She led o'er vales and mountains, to explore
 What healing virtue swells the tender veins
 Of herbs and flow'rs, or what the beams of morn
 Draw forth, distilling from the clefted rind
 In balmy tears. But some to higher hopes

Were destin'd; some within a finer mould
She wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame:
To these the Sire Omnipotent unfolds
The world's harmonious volume, there to read
The transcript of himself. On ev'ry part
They trace the bright impressions of his hand:
In earth or air, the meadow's purple stores,
The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin's form,
Blooming with rosy smiles, they see portray'd
That uncreated beauty which delights
The mind supreme: they also feel her charms
Enamour'd; they partake th' eternal joy.

For as old Memnon's image, long renown'd
By fabling Nilus, to the quiv'ring touch
Of Titan's ray with each repulsive string
Consenting founded thro' the warbling air
Unbidden strains; ev'n so did Nature's hand
To certain species of external things
Attune the finer organs of the mind:
So the glad impulse of congenial pow'rs,
Or of sweet sound or fair proportion'd form,
The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,
Thrills thro' Imagination's tender frame
From nerve to nerve: all naked and alive
They catch the spreading rays, till now the soul
At length discloses ev'ry tuneful spring,
To that harmonious movement from without
Responsive. Then the inexpressive strain

Diffuses its enchantment; Fancy dreams
 Of sacred fountains, and Elysian groves,
 And vales of bliss: the intellectual pow'r
 Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
 And smiles: the passions, gently sooth'd away,
 Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
 Alone are waking; love and joy serene
 As airs that fan the summer. O! attend,
 Whoe'er thou art whom these delights can touch,
 Whose candid bosom the refining love
 Of Nature warms; O! listen to my Song,
 And I will guide thee to her fav'rite walks,
 And teach thy solitude her voice to hear,
 And point her loveliest features to thy view.

Know then, whate'er of Nature's pregnant stores,
 Whate'er of mimic Art's reflected forms,
 With love and admiration thus inflame
 The pow'rs of fancy, her delighted sons
 To three illustrious orders have referr'd,
 Three sister Graces whom the painter's hand,
 The poet's tongue, confesses; the Sublime,
 The Wonderful, the Fair. I see them dawn!
 I see the radiant visions where they rise,
 More lovely than when Lucifer displays
 His beaming forehead thro' the gates of morn
 To lead the train of Phoebus and the spring.
 Say, why was man so eminently rais'd

¶. 151. *Say, why was man, &c.*] In apologizing for the frequent negligences of the sublimest authors of Greece, "Those

Amid the vast creation? why ordain'd
 Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,
 With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame,
 But that th' Omnipotent might send him forth, 155
 In sight of mortal and immortal pow'rs,
 As on a boundless theatre, to run
 The great career of justice, to exalt
 His gen'rous aim to all diviner deeds,
 To chase each partial purpose from his breast, 160
 And thro' the mists of passion and of sense,
 And thro' the tossing tide of chance and pain,
 To hold his course unfault'ring, while the voice
 Of Truth and Virtue up the steep ascent

"godlike geniuses," says Longinus, "were well assured that
 "Nature had not intended man for a low-spirited or ignoble
 "being, but bringing us into life and the midst of this wide
 "universe as before a multitude assembled at some heroick so-
 "lemnity that we might be spectators of all her magnificence;
 "and candidates high in emulation for the prize of glory; she
 "has therefore implanted in our souls an inextinguishable love
 "of every thing great and exalted, of every thing which ap-
 "pears divine beyond our comprehension: whence it comes
 "to pass that even the whole world is not an object sufficient
 "for the depth and rapidity of human Imagination, which
 "often sallies forth beyond the limits of all that surrounds us.
 "Let any man cast his eye thro' the whole circle of our existence,
 "and consider how especially it abounds in excellent and grand
 "objects, he will soon acknowledge for what enjoyments and
 "pursuits we were destined. Thus by the very propensity of
 "Nature we are led to admire not little springs or shallow ri-
 "vulets, however clear and delicious, but the Nile, the Rhine,
 "the Danube, and, much more than all, the ocean," &c.
Dionys. Longin. de Sublim. sect. xxiv.

Of Nature calls him to his high reward, 165
Th' applauding smile of Heav'n? else wherefore burns
In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
And mocks possession? wherefore darts the mind
With such resistless ardour to embrace 170
Majestick forms, impatient to be free
Spurning the gross control of wilful might,
Proud of the strong contention of her toils,
Proud to be daring? Who but rather turns
To heav'n's broad fire his unconstrained view 175
Than to the glimm'ring of a waxen flame?
Who that from Alpine heights his lab'ring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon to survey
Nilus or Ganges rowling his bright wave [shade,
Thro' mountains, plains, thro' empires black with
And continents of sand, will turn his gaze 181
To mark the windings of a scanty rill
That murmurs at his feet? The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heav'n-aspiring wing
Beneath its native quarry. Tir'd of earth 185
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
'Thro' fields of air, pursues the flying storm,
Rides on the volly'd lightning thro' the heav'ns,
Or yok'd with whirlwinds and the northern blast
Sweeps the long track of day. Then high she soars 190
The blue profound, and hov'ring round the Sun
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream

Of light, beholds his unrelenting sway
 Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
 The fated rounds of time : thence far effus'd
 She darts her swiftneſs up the long career
 Of devious comets, thro' its burning ſigns
 Exulting meaſures the perennial wheel
 Of Nature, and looks back on all the ſtars,
 Whoſe blended light as with a milky zone
 Invests the orient. Now amaz'd ſhe views
 The empyreal waſte, where happy ſpirits hold
 Beyond this concave heav'n their calm abode,
 And fields of radiance whoſe unfading light
 Has travell'd the profound fix thouſand years,
 Nor yet arrives in fight of mortal things.
 Ev'n on the barriers of the world untir'd
 She meditates th' eternal depth below,
 Till half recoiling down the headlong ſteep
 She plunges, ſoon o'erwhelm'd and ſwallow'd up

¶ 202. *The empyreal waſte, &c.*] “Ne ſe peut-il point qu’il
 “y a un grand eſpace au delà de la région des étoiles? Que ſe
 “ſoit le ciel empyrée, ou non, toujours cet eſpace immense
 “qui environne toute cette région, pourra être rempli de bon-
 “heur et de gloire. Il pourra être conçu comme l’océan, où
 “ſe rendent les fleuves de toutes les créatures bienheureuſes,
 “quand elles ſeront venues à leur perfection dans le ſyſtème
 “des étoiles.” *Leibnitz dans la Theodicee, part. I. ſect. 19.*

¶ 204. —*whoſe unfading light, &c.*] It was a notion of the
 great Mr. Huygens that there may be fixed ſtars at ſuch a di-
 ſtance from our ſolar ſyſtem as that their light ſhould not
 have had time to reach us even from the creation of the world
 to this day.

In that immense of being. There her hopes
 Rest at the fated goal: for from the birth
 Of mortal man the Sovran Maker said
 That not in humble nor in brief delight,
 Not in the fading echoes of renown,
 Pow'rs purple robes nor Pleasure's flow'ry lap,
 The soul should find enjoyment; but from these
 Turning disdainful to an equal good
 Thro' all th' ascent of things enlarge her view,
 Till ev'ry bound at length should disappear,
 And infinite perfection close the scene. 215

Call now to mind what high capacious pow'rs
 Lie folded up in man; how far beyond
 The praise of mortals may th' eternal growth
 Of Nature to perfection half divine 225
 Expand the blooming soul: what pity then
 Should sloth's unkindly fogs depress to earth
 Her tender blossom, choke the streams of life,
 And blast her spring! Far otherwise design'd
 Almighty Wisdom; Nature's happy cares 230
 Th' obedient heart far otherwise incline;
 Witness the sprightly joy when aught unknown
 Strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active pow'r
 To brisker measures; witness the neglect
 Of all familiar prospects, tho' beheld 235

v. 234. — *the neglect—Of all familiar prospects, &c.*] It is here said that in consequence of the love of novelty objects which at first were highly delightful to the mind lose that effect by repeated attention to them; but the instance of habit

With transport once, the fond attentive gaze
Of young Astonishment, the sober zeal
Of Age commenting on prodigious things.

is opposed to this observation, for there objects at first distasteful are in time rendered entirely agreeable by repeated attention.

The difficulty in this case will be removed if we consider that, when objects at first agreeable lose that influence by frequently recurring, the mind is wholly passive and the perception involuntary; but habit on the other hand generally supposes choice and activity accompanying it; so that the pleasure arises here not from the object but from the mind's conscious determination of its own activity, and consequently increases in proportion to the frequency of that determination.

It will still be urged perhaps that a familiarity with disagreeable objects renders them at length acceptable, even when there is no room for the mind to resolve or act at all: in this case the appearance must be accounted for one of these ways:

The pleasure from habit may be merely negative. The object at first gave uneasiness; this uneasiness gradually wears off as the object grows familiar; and the mind finding it at last entirely removed, reckons its situation really pleasureable compared with what it had experienced before.

The dislike conceived of the object at first might be owing to prejudice or want of attention; consequently the mind being necessitated to review it often may at length perceive its own mistake, and be reconciled to what it had looked on with aversion; in which case a sort of instinctive justice naturally leads it to make amends for the injury by running toward the other extreme of fondness and attachment.

Or, lastly, though the object itself should always continue disagreeable, yet circumstances of pleasure or good fortune may occur along with it: thus an association may arise in the mind and the object never be remembered without those pleasing circumstances attending it, by which means the disagreeable impression which it at first occasioned will in time be quite obliterated.

For such the bounteous providence of Heaven;
 In ev'ry breast implanting this desire 240
 Of objects new and strange, to urge us on
 With unremitted labour to pursue
 Those sacred stores that wait the ripening soul
 In Truth's exhaustless bosom. What need words
 To paint its pow'r? For this the daring youth 245
 Breaks from his weeping mother's anxious arms
 In foreign climes to rove; the pensive sage,
 Heedless of sleep or midnight's harmful damp,
 Hangs o'er the sickly taper; and untir'd
 The virgin follows, with enchanted step, 250
 The mazes of some wild and wondrous tale
 From morn to eve, unmindful of her form,
 Unmindful of the happy dress that stole
 The wishes of the youth when ev'ry maid
 With envy pin'd. Hence, finally, by night 255
 The village matron round the blazing hearth
 Suspends the infant audience with her tales,
 Breathing astonishment! of witching rhymes
 And evil spirits, of the deathbed call

¶ 240. — *this desire—Of objects new and strange, &c.*
 These two ideas are often confounded, though it is evident the mere novelty of an object makes it agreeable, even where the mind is not affected with the least degree of wonder; whereas wonder indeed always implies novelty, being never excited by common or wellknown appearances. But the pleasure in both cases is explicable from the same final cause, the acquisition of knowledge and enlargement of our views of Nature: on this account it is natural to treat of them together.

Of him who robb'd the widow and devour'd
The orphan's portion, of unquiet souls
Ris'n from the grave to ease the heavy guilt
Of deeds in life conceal'd, of shapes that walk
At dead of night and clank their chains, and wave
The torch of hell around the murd'rer's bed :
At ev'ry solemn pause the crowd recoil,
Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd
With shiv'ring sighs till, eager for th' event,
Around the beldame all erect they hang,
Each trembling heart with grateful terrors quell'd.

But lo! disclos'd in all her smiling pomp,
Where Beauty onward moving claims the verse
Her charms inspire : the freely flowing verse
In thy immortal praise, O form divine!
Smooths her mellifluent stream. Thee Beauty! thee
The regal dome and thy enliv'ning ray
The mossy roofs adore: thou, better sun!
For ever beamest on th' enchanted heart
Love, and harmonious wonder, and delight
Poetick. Brightest progeny of Heav'n!
How shall I trace thy features? where select
The roseate hues to emulate thy bloom?
Haste then, my Song! thro' Nature's wide expanse,
Haste then, and gather all her comeliest wealth,
Whate'er bright spoils the florid earth contains,
Whate'er the waters or the liquid air,
To deck thy lovely labour. Wilt thou fly

With laughing Autumn to th' Atlantick isles,
And range with him th' Hesperian field, and see
Where'er his fingers touch the fruitful grove 290
The branches shoot with gold, where'er his step
Marks the glad soil the tender clusters grow
With purple ripeness, and invest each hill
As with the blushes of an ev'ning sky?
Or wilt thou rather stoop thy vagrant plume 295
Where gliding thro' his daughter's honour'd shades
The smooth Peneus from his glassy flood
Reflects purpureal Tempe's pleasant scene?
Fair Tempe! haunt belov'd of sylvan pow'rs,
Of Nymphs and Fauns, where in the Golden Age 300
They play'd in secret on the shady brink
With ancient Pan, while round their choral steps
Young Hours and genial gales with constant hand
Shower'd blossoms, odours, shower'd ambrosial dews,
And spring's Elysian bloom. Her flow'ry store 305
To thee nor Tempe shall refuse nor watch
Of winged Hydra guard Hesperian fruits
From thy free spoil. O! bear then unprov'd
Thy smiling treasures to the green recess
Where young Dione stays: with sweetest airs 310
Entice her forth to lend her angel form
For Beauty's honour'd image. Hither turn
Thy graceful footsteps; hither, gentle Maid!
Incline thy polish'd forehead: let thy eyes
Effuse the mildness of their azure dawn, 315

And may the fanning breezes waft aside
Thy radiant locks, disclosing as it bends
With airy softness from the marble neck
The cheek fair-blooming and the rosy lip,
Where winning Smiles and Pleasures sweet as Love
With sanctity and wisdom temp'ring blend
Their soft allurements: then the pleasing force
Of Nature, and her kind parental care,
Worthier I'd sing; then all th' enamour'd youth,
With each admiring virgin, to my lyre
Should throng attentive, while I point on high
Where Beauty's living image, like the Morn
That wakes in Zephyr's arms the blushing May,
Moves onward, or as Venus when she stood
Effulgent on the pearly car and smil'd
Fresh from the deep, and conscious of her form,
To see the Tritons tune their vocal shells,
And each cerulean sister of the flood
With loud acclaim attend her o'er the waves
To seek th' Idalian bow'r. Ye smiling band
Of Youths and Virgins! who thro' all the maze
Of young desire with rival steps pursue
This charm of beauty, if the pleasing toil
Can yield a moment's respite hither turn
Your favourable ear, and trust my words.
I do not mean to wake the gloomy form
Of Superstition dress'd in Wisdom's garb
To damp your tender hopes; I do not mean

To bid the jealous Thund'rer fire the heav'ns,
Or shapes infernal rend the groaning earth, 345
To fright you from your joys : my cheerful Song
With better omens calls you to the field,
Pleas'd with your gen'rous ardour in the chase,
And warm like you. Then tell me, for ye know,
Does Beauty ever deign to dwell where health 350
And active use are strangers? is her charm
Confest in aught whose most peculiar ends
Are lame and fruitless? or did Nature mean
This pleasing call the herald of a lie,
To hide the shame of discord and disease, 355
And catch with fair hypocrisy the heart
Of idle Faith? O no! with better cares
Th' indulgent mother, conscious how infirm
Her offspring tread the paths of good and ill,
By this illustrious image, in each kind 360
Still most illustrious where the object holds
Its native pow'rs most perfect, she by this
Illumes the headstrong impulse of Desire,
And sanctifies his choice. The gen'rous glebe
Whose bosom smiles with verdure, the clear track 365
Of streams delicious to the thirsty soul,
The bloom of nectar'd fruitage ripe to sense,
And ev'ry charm of animated things,
Are only pledges of a state sincere,
Th' integrity and order of their frame 370
When all is well within, and ev'ry end

Accomplish'd. Thus was Beauty sent from Heav'n
 The lovely miniftrefs of Truth and Good
 In this dark world; for Truth and Good are one,
 And Beauty dwells in them and they in her

¶ 374. — *Truth and Good are one, — And Beauty dwells in them, &c.*] “Do you imagine,” says Socrates to Aristippus, “that what is good is not beautiful? have you not observed “that these appearances always coincide? Virtue, for instance, “in the same respect as to which we call it good is ever acknowledged to be beautiful also. In the characters of men “we always join the two denominations together *. The “beauty of human bodies corresponds in like manner with “that economy of parts which constitutes them good, and in “every circumstance of life the same object is constantly accounted both beautiful and good, inasmuch as it answers “the purposes for which it was designed.” *Xenoph. Memorab. Socrat. lib. iii. cap. 8.*

This excellent observation has been illustrated and extended by the noble restorer of ancient philosophy. See *The Characteristics*, vol. ii. p. 339 and 422, and vol. iii. p. 181. And another ingenious author has particularly shewn that it holds in the general laws of Nature, in the works of art, and the conduct of the sciences. *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, Treat. i. sect. 8. As to the connexion between beauty and truth, there are two opinions concerning it. Some philosophers assert an independent and invariable law in Nature, in consequence of which “all rational beings must alike perceive beauty in some certain proportions, and deformity in the contrary.” And this necessity being supposed the same with that which commands the assent or dissent of the understanding, it follows of course that beauty is founded on the universal and unchangeable law of truth.

But others there are who believe beauty to be merely a relative and arbitrary thing; that indeed it was a benevolent

* This the Athenians did in a peculiar manner by the words *καλοκαγαθός, καλοκαταβάς.*

With like participation: wherefore then,
O Sons of Earth! would ye dissolve the tie?
O! wherefore with a rash impetuous aim
Seek ye those flow'ry joys with which the hand
Of lavish Fancy paints each flatt'ring scene 380
Where Beauty seems to dwell, nor once inquire
Where is the sanction of eternal truth,
Or where the seal of undecitful good,
To save your search from folly! Wanting these
Lo! Beauty withers in your void embrace, 385
And with the glitt'ring of an idiot's toy
Did fancy mock your vows. Nor let the gleam
Of youthful hope that shines upon your hearts

provision in Nature to annex so delightful a sensation to those objects which are best and most perfect in themselves, that so we might be engaged to the choice of them at once, and without staying to infer their usefulness from their structure and effects; but that it is not impossible, in a physical sense, that two beings of equal capacities for truth should perceive one of them beauty and the other deformity in the same proportions. And upon this supposition, by that truth which is always connected with beauty, nothing more can be meant than the conformity of any object to those proportions upon which after careful examination the beauty of that species is found to depend. Polycietus, for instance, a famous ancient sculptor, from an accurate mensuration of the several parts of the most perfect human bodies deduced a canon or system of proportions which was the rule of all succeeding artists. Suppose a statue modelled according to this, a man of mere natural taste upon looking at it, without entering into its proportions, confesses and admires its beauty; whereas a professor of the art applies his measures to the head, the neck, or the hand, and without attending to its beauty pronounces the workmanship to be just and true.

Be chill'd or clouded at this awful task
 To learn the lore of undeceitful good 390
 And truth eternal. Tho' the pois'nous charms
 Of baleful superstition guide the feet
 Of servile numbers thro' a dreary way
 To their abode, thro' deserts, thorns, and mire,
 And leave the wretched pilgrim all forlorn 395
 To muse at last amid the ghostly gloom
 Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloister'd cells,
 To walk with spectres thro' the midnight shade,
 And to the screaming owl's accursed song
 Attune the dreadful workings of his heart, 400
 Yet be not ye dismay'd; a gentler star
 Your lovely search illumines. From the grove
 Where Wisdom talk'd with her Athenian sons
 Could my ambitious hand intwine a wreath
 Of Plato's olive with the Mantuan bay, 405
 Then should my pow'rful Verse at once dispel
 Those monkish horrors, then in light divine
 Disclose th' Elysian prospect, where the steps
 Of those whom Nature charms thro' blooming walks,
 Thro' fragrant mountains and poetick streams, 410
 Amid the train of sages, heroes, bards,
 Led by their winged Genius and the choir
 Of laurell'd Science and harmonious Art,
 Proceed exulting to th' eternal shrine
 Where Truth conspicious with her sister twins, 415
 The undivided partners of her sway,
 With Good and Beauty reigns. O let not us,

Lull'd by luxurious Pleasure's languid strain,
Or crouching to the frowns of bigot Rage,
O let us not a moment pause to join 420
That godlike band! and if the gracious pow'r
Who first awaken'd my untutor'd song
Will to my invocation breathe anew
The tuneful spirit, then thro' all our paths
Ne'er shall the sound of this devoted lyre 425
Be wanting; whether on the rosy mead,
When summer smiles, to warn the melting heart
Of Luxury's allurement, whether firm
Against the torrent and the stubborn hill
To urge bold Virtue's unremitted nerve, 430
And wake the strong divinity of soul
That conquers Chance and Fate, or whether struck
For sounds of triumph to proclaim her toils
Upon the lofty summit, round her brow
To twine the wreath of incorruptive praise, 435
To trace her hallow'd light thro' future worlds,
And bless Heav'n's image in the heart of man.
Thus with a faithful aim have we presum'd
Advent'rous to delineate Nature's form,
Whether in vast majestick pomp array'd, 440
Or dress'd for pleasing wonder, or serene
In Beauty's rosy smile. It now remains
Thro' various Being's fair proportion'd scale
To trace the rising lustre of her charms
From their first twilight, shining forth at length 445

To full meridian splendour. Of degree
The least and lowliest in th' effusive warmth
Of colours mingling with a random blaze
Doth Beauty dwell; then higher in the line
And variation of determin'd shape, 450
Where Truth's eternal measures mark the bound
Of circle, cube, or sphere: the third ascent
Unites this vary'd symmetry of parts
With colour's bland allurement, as the pearl
Shines in the concave of its azure bed, 455
And painted shells indent their speckled wreath.
Then more attractive rise the blooming forms
Thro' which the breath of Nature has infus'd
Her genial pow'r to draw with pregnant veins
Nutricious moisture from the bounteous earth 460
In fruit and seed prolifick; thus the flow'rs
Their purple honours with the spring resume,
And such the stately tree which autumn bends
With blushing treasures. But more lovely still
Is Nature's charm where to the full consent 465
Of complicated members, to the bloom
Of colour and the vital change of growth
Life's holy flame and piercing sense are giv'n,
And active motion speaks the temper'd soul:
So moves the bird of Juno, so the steed 470
With rival ardour beats the dusty plain,
And faithful dogs with eager airs of joy
Salute their fellows. Thus doth Beauty dwell
There most conspic'ous, ev'n in outward shape,

Where dawns the high expression of a mind, 475
 By steps conducting our enraptur'd search
 'To that Eternal Origin whose pow'r
 Thro' all th' unbounded symmetry of things,
 Like rays effulging from the parent sun,
 This endless mixture of her charms diffus'd. 480
 Mind, mind alone, (bear witness Earth and Heav'n!)
 The living fountains in itself contains
 Of beauteous and sublime: here hand in hand
 Sit paramount the Graces, here enthron'd
 Celestial Venus with divinest airs 485
 Invites the soul to never fading joy.
 Look then abroad thro' Nature, to the range
 Of planets, suns, and adamantinè spheres,
 Wheeling unshaken thro' the void immense,
 And speak, O Man! does this capacious scene 490
 With half that kindling majesty dilate
 Thy strong conception as when Brutus rose
 Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate
 Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm
 Aloft extending, like eternal Jove 495
 When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
 On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
 And bad the father of his country Hail!
 For lo the tyrant prostrate on the dust!

* v. 492. *As when Brutus rose, &c.* Cicero himself describes this fact—"Cæsare interfecto—statim cruentum alte extol-
 lens M. Brutus pugionem, Ciceronem nominatim exclama-
 "vit, atque ei recuperatam libertatem est gratulatus." *Cic. Philipp. ii. 12.*

And Rome again is free? Is aught so fair
In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
In the bright eye of Hesper or the Morn,
In Nature's fairest forms, is aught so fair
As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush
Of him who strives with Fortune to be just?
The graceful tear that streams for others' woes?
Or the mild majesty of private life,
Where Peace with ever-blooming olive crowns
The gate, where Honour's lib'ral hands effuse
Unenvy'd treasures, and the snowy wings
Of Innocence and Love protect the scene?
Once more search undisway'd the dark profound
Where Nature works in secret, view the beds
Of mineral treasure, and th' eternal vault
That bounds the hoary ocean; trace the forms
Of atoms moving with incessant change
Their elemental round, behold the seeds
Of being, and the energy of life
Kindling the mass with ever active flame,
Then to the secrets of the working Mind
Attentive turn; from dim oblivion call
Her fleet ideal band, and bid them go;
Break thro' time's barrier, and o'ertake the hour
That saw the heav'ns created; then declare
If aught were found in those external scenes
To move thy wonder now. For what are all
The forms which brute unconscious matter wears,
Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts?

Not reaching to the heart soon feeble grows
 The superficial impulse; dull their charms, 530
 And satiate soon, and pall the languid eye.
 Not so the moral species, nor the powers
 Of genius and design: th' ambitious Mind
 There sees herself; by these congenial forms
 Tough'd and awaken'd, with intenser act 535
 She bends each nerve, and meditates wellpleas'd
 Her features in the mirror: for of all
 The inhabitants of earth to man alone
 Creative Wisdom gave to lift his eye
 To truth's eternal measures, thence to frame 540
 The sacred laws of action and of will,
 Discerning justice from unequal deeds,
 And temperance from folly. But beyond
 This energy of truth, whose dictates bind
 Assenting reason, the benignant Sire, 545
 To deck the honour'd paths of just and good,
 Has added bright Imagination's rays,
 Where Virtue rising from the awful depth
 Of Truth's mysterious bosom doth forsake
 Th' unadorn'd condition of her birth, 550
 And dres'd by Fancy in ten thousand hues
 Assumes a various feature, to attract

v. 548. *Where Virtue rising from the awful depth—Of Truth's mysterious bosom, &c.*] According to the opinion of those who assert moral obligation to be founded on an immutable and universal law, and that which is usually called the moral sense to be determined by the peculiar temper of the Imagination and the earliest associations of ideas.

With charms responsive to each gazer's eye
The hearts of man, Amid his rural walks
Th' ingenuous youth, whom solitude inspires 555
With purest wishes, from the pensive shade
Beholds her moving like a virgin Muse
That wakes her lyre to some indulgent theme
Of harmony and wonder, while among
The herd of servile minds her strenuous form 560
Indignant flashes on the patriot's eye,
And thro' the rolls of memory appeals
To ancient honour, or, in act serene
Yet watchful, raises the majestick sword
Of publick pow'r, from dark Ambition's reach 565
To guard the sacred volume of the laws.

Genius of ancient Greece! whose faithful steps
Wellpleas'd I follow thro' the sacred paths
Of Nature and of Science; Nurse divine
Of all heroick deeds and fair desires! 570
O let the breath of thy extended praise
Inspire my kindling bosom to the height
Of this untempted theme! Nor be my thoughts
Presumptuous counted if amid the calm
That sooths this vernal ev'ning into smiles 575
I steal impatient from the sordid haunts
Of Strife and low Ambition to attend
Thy sacred presence in the sylvan shade,
By their malignant footsteps ne'er profan'd.
Descend propitious to my favour'd eye! 580

Such in thy mien, thy warm exalted air,
 As when the Persian tyrant foil'd, and stung
 With shame and desperation, gnash'd his teeth
 To see thee rend the pageants of his throne,
 And at the lightning of thy lifted spear 585
 Crouch'd like a slave. Bring all thy martial spoils,
 Thy palms, thy laurels, thy triumphal songs,
 Thy smiling band of arts, thy godlike fires
 Of civil wisdom, thy heroick youth,
 Warm from the schools of glory. Guide my way 590
 Thro' fair Lyceum's walk, the green retreats
 Of Academus, and the thymy vale
 Where oft' enchanted with Socratick sounds
 Ilissus pure devolv'd his tuneful stream
 In gentler murmurs. From the blooming store 595
 Of these auspicious fields may I unblam'd
 Transplant some living blossoms to adorn
 My native clime; while far above the flight
 Of fancy's plume aspiring I unlock
 The springs of ancient wisdom; while I join 600
 Thy name, thrice honour'd! with th' immortal praise
 Of Nature; while to my compatriot youth
 I point the high example of thy sons,
 And tune to Attick themes the British lyre. 604

✧. 591. *Lyceum*.] The school of Aristotle.

✧. 592. *Academus*.] The school of Plato.

✧. 594. *Ilissus*.] One of the rivers on which Athens was situated. Plato in some of his finest Dialogues lays the scene of the conversation with Socrates on its banks.

END OF BOOK FIRST.

THE
PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BOOK II.

The Argument.

THE separation of the works of Imagination from philosophy the cause of their abuse among the Moderns. Prospect of their reunion under the influence of publick liberty. Enumeration of accidental Pleasures, which increase the effect of objects delightful to the Imagination. The Pleasures of sense. Particular circumstances of the mind. Discovery of truth. Perception of contrivance and design. Emotion of the passions. All the natural passions partake of a pleasing sensation; with the final cause of this constitution illustrated by an Allegorical Vision, and exemplified in sorrow, pity, terrou, and indignation.

WHEN shall the laurel and the vocal string
Resume their honours? when shall we behold
The tuneful tongue, the Promethean hand,
Aspire to ancient praise? Alas! how faint,
How slow, the dawn of beauty and of truth
Breaks the reluctant shades of Gothick night
Which yet involve the nations! Long they groan'd
Beneath the furies of rapacious Force
Oft' as the gloomy North with iron swarms
Tempest'ous pouring from her frozen caves
Blasted the Italian shore, and swept the works
Of Liberty and Wisdom down the gulf
Of alldevouring Night. As long immur'd
In noontide darkness by the glimm'ring lamp
Each Muse and each fair Science pin'd away
The fordid hours, while foul Barbarian hands

Their mysteries profan'd, unstrung the lyre,
 And chain'd the soaring pinion down to earth.
 At last the Muses rose and spurn'd their bonds,
 And wildly warbling scatter'd as they flew 20
 Their blooming wreaths from fair Valclusa's bow'rs
 'To Arno's myrtle border and the shore
 Of soft Parthenope. But still the rage
 Of dire Ambition and gigantick Pow'r

✓. 19. *At last the Muses rose, &c.*] About the age of Hugh Capet, founder of the third race of French kings, the poets of Provence were in high reputation, a sort of strolling bards or rhapsodists, who went about the courts of princes and noblemen entertaining them at festivals with musick and poetry. They attempted both the epick, ode, and satire, and abounded in a wild and fantastick vein of fable, partly allegorical, and partly founded on traditionary legends of the Saracen wars. These were the rudiments of Italian poetry. But their taste and composition must have been extremely barbarous, as we may judge by those who followed the turn of their fable in much politer times, such as Boiardo, Bernardo, Tasso, Ariosto, &c.

✓. 21. *Valclusa.*] The famous retreat of Francisco Petrarca, the father of Italian poetry, and his mistress Laura, a lady of Avignon.

✓. 22. *Arno.*] The river which runs by Florence, the birth-place of Dante and Boccacio.

✓. 23. *Parthenope.*] Or Naples, the birth-place of Sannazaro. The great Torquato Tasso was born at Sorrento in the kingdom of Naples.

Ibid. — *the rage—Of dire Ambition, &c.*] This relates to the cruel wars among the republicks of Italy, and abominable politicks of its little princes, about the fifteenth century. These at last, in conjunction with the Papal power, entirely extinguished the spirit of liberty in that country, and established that abuse of the fine arts which has been since propagated over all Europe.

From publick aims and from the busy walk 25
 Of civil commerce drove the bolder train
 Of penetrating Science to the cells
 Where studious Ease consumes the silent hour
 In shadowy searches and unfruitful care.
 Thus from their guardians torn the tender arts 30
 Of mimic fancy and harmonious joy
 To priestly domination and the lust
 Of lawless courts their amiable toil

¶ 30. *Thus from their guardians torn the tender arts, &c.*]
 Nor were they only losers by the separation; for philosophy itself, to use the words of a noble philosopher, "being thus severed
 " by the sprightly arts and sciences, must consequently grow
 " dronish, insipid, pedantick, useless, and directly opposite
 " to the real knowledge and practice of the world." Inasmuch
 that "a gentleman," says another excellent writer, "cannot
 " easily bring himself to like so austere and ungainly a form;
 " so greatly is it changed from what was once the delight
 " of the finest gentlemen of Antiquity, and their recreation
 " after the hurry of publick affairs!" From this condition it
 cannot be recovered but by uniting it once more with the
 works of Imagination; and we have had the pleasure of observing a very great progress made towards their union in England within these few years. It is hardly possible to conceive them at a greater distance from each other than at the Revolution, when Locke stood at the head of one party and Dryden of the other. But the general spirit of liberty which has ever since been growing naturally invited our men of wit and genius to improve that influence which the arts of persuasion gave them with the people, by applying them to subjects of importance to society. Thus poetry and eloquence became considerable, and philosophy is now of course obliged to borrow of their embellishments in order even to gain audience with the publick.

For three inglorious ages have resign'd,
In vain reluctant, and Torquato's tongue 35
Was tun'd for slavish Pæans at the throne
Of tinsel Pomp, and Raphael's magick hand
Effus'd its fair creation to enchant
The fond adoring herd in Latian fanes
To blind belief, while on their prostrate necks 40
The sable tyrant plants his heel secure.
But now, behold! the radiant era dawns
When Freedom's ample fabrick, fix'd at length
For endless years on Albion's happy shore,
In full proportion once more shall extend 45
To all the kindred pow'rs of social bliss
A common mansion, a parental roof:
There shall the Virtues, there shall Wisdom's train,
Their long-lost friends rejoining, as of old,
Embrace the smiling family of Arts, 50
The Muses and the Graces. Then no more
Shall Vice, distracting their delicious gifts
To aims abhorr'd, with high distaste and scorn
Turn from their charms the philosophick eye,
The patriot bosom; then no more the paths 55
Of publick care or intellectual toil
Alone by footsteps haughty and severe
In gloomy state be trod: th' harmonious Muse
And her persuasive sisters then shall plant
Their shelt'ring laurels o'er the bleak ascent, 60
And scatter flow'rs along the rugged way.

Arm'd with the lyre already have we dar'd
 To pierce divine Philosophy's retreats
 And teach the Muse her lore, already strove
 Their long divided honours to unite,
 While temp'ring this deep argument we sang
 Of Truth and Beauty. Now the same glad task
 Impends; now urging our ambitious toil
 We hasten to recount the various springs
 Of adventitious Pleasure, which adjoin
 Their grateful influence to the prime effect
 Of objects grand or beautiful, and enlarge
 The complicated joy. The sweets of sense
 Do they not oft' with kind accession flow
 To raise harmonious Fancy's native charm?
 So while we taste the fragrance of the rose
 Glows not her blush the fairer? while we view
 Amid the noontide walk a limpid rill
 Gush thro' the trickling herbage, to the thirst
 Of summer yielding the delicious draught
 Of cool refreshment, o'er the mossy brink
 Shines not the surface clearer, and the waves
 With sweeter musick murmur as they flow?

Nor this alone. The various lot of life
 Oft' from external circumstance assumes
 A moment's disposition to rejoice
 In those delights which at a diff'rent hour
 Would pass unheeded. Fair the face of spring
 When rural songs and odours wake the Morn

To ev'ry eye; but how much more to his 90
Round whom the bed of sickness long diffus'd
Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair
When first with fresh-born vigour he inhales
The balmy breeze, and feels the blessed sun
Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life 95
Chasing oppressive damps and languid pain!
Or shall I mention where celestial Truth
Her awful light discloses, to bestow
A more majestick pomp on Beauty's frame?
For man loves knowledge, and the beams of truth 100
More welcome touch his understanding's eye
Than all the blandishments of sound his ear,
Than all of taste his tongue. Nor ever yet
The melting rainbow's vernal-tinctur'd hues
To me have shone so pleasing as when first 105
The hand of Science pointed out the path
In which the sunbeams gleaming from the west
Fall on the wat'ry cloud whose darksome veil
Involves the orient, and that trickling show'r
Piercing thro' ev'ry crystalline convex 110
Of clust'ring dewdrops to their flight oppos'd
Recoil at length where concave all behind
Th' internal surface of each glassy orb
Repels their forward passage into air
That thence direct they seek the radiant goal 115
From which their course began, and as they strike
In diff'rent lines the gazer's obvious eye

Assume a diff'rent lustre thro' the bréde
Of colours changing from the splendid rose
To the pale violet's dejected hue. 120

Or shall we touch that kind access of joy
That springs to each fair object while we trace
Thro' all its fabrick Wisdom's artful aim
Disposing ev'ry part, and gaining still
By means proportion'd her benignant end? 125
Speak ye the pure delight whose favour'd steps
The lamp of Science thro' the jealous maze
Of Nature guides when haply you reveal
Her secret honours, whether in the sky,
The beauteous laws of light, the central pow'rs
That wheel the pensile planets round the year,
Whether in wonders of the rowling deep,
Or the rich fruits of allsustaining earth,
Or fine-adjusted springs of life and sense,
Ye scan the counsels of their Author's hand. 135

What, when to raise the meditated scene
The flame of passion thro' the struggling soul
Deep-kindled shows across that sudden blaze
The object of its rapture, vast of size,
With fiercer colours and a night of shade? 140
What? like a storm from their capacious bed
The sounding seas o'erwhelming, when the might
Of these eruptions working from the depth
Of man's strong apprehension shakes his frame
Ev'n to the base, from ev'ry naked sense. 145

Of pain or pleasure dissipating all
 Opinion's feeble cov' rings, and the veil
 Spun from the cobweb fashion of the times
 To hide the feeling heart? then Nature speaks
 Her genuine language, and the words of men, 150
 Big with the very motion of their souls,
 Declare with what accumulated force
 Th' impetuous nerve of passion urges on
 The native weight and energy of things.

Yet more her honours: where nor beauty claims
 Nor shews of good the thirsty sense allure 156
 From passion's pow'r alone our nature holds
 Essential Pleasure. Passion's fierce illapse
 Rouses the mind's whole fabrick, with supplies
 Of daily impulse keeps th' elastick pow'rs 160

¶. 157. *From passion's pow'r alone, &c.*] This very mysterious kind of Pleasure, which is often found in the exercise of passions generally counted painful, has been taken notice of by several authors. Lucretius resolves it into selflove:

"*Suave mari magno,*" &c. lib. ii. 1.

As if a man was never pleased in being moved at the distress of a tragedy without a cool reflection that though these fictitious personages were so unhappy yet he himself was perfectly at ease and in safety. The ingenious author of the *Reflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture*, accounts for it by the general delight which the mind takes in its own activity, and the abhorrence it feels of an indolent and inattentive state: and this joined with the moral approbation of its own temper, which attends these emotions when natural and just, is certainly the true foundation of the pleasure, which as it is the origin and basis of tragedy and epick deserved a very particular consideration in this poem.

Intensely poiz'd, and polishes anew,
By that collision, all the fine machine;
Else rust would rise, and foulness, by degrees
Incumb'ring, choke at last what Heav'n design'd
For ceaseless motion and a round of toil. 165
—But say, does ev'ry passion thus to man
Administer delight? That name indeed
Becomes the rosy breath of Love, becomes
The radiant smiles of Joy, th' applauding hand
Of Admiration; but the bitter show'r 170
That Sorrow sheds upon a brother's grave,
But the dumb palsy of nocturnal Fear,
Or those consuming fires that gnaw the heart
Of panting Indignation, find we there
To move delight?—Then listen while my tongue
Th' unalter'd will of Heav'n with faithful awe 176
Reveals, what old Harmodius wont to teach
My early age; Harmodius! who had weigh'd
Within his learned mind whate'er the schools
Of Wisdom or thy lonely-whisp'ring voice 180
O faithful Nature! dictate of the laws
Which govern and support this mighty frame
Of universal being: oft' the hours
From morn to eve have stol'n unmark'd away
While mute attention hung upon his lips; 185
As thus the sage his awful tale began:
“'Twas in the windings of an ancient wood,
“When spotless youth with solitude resigns

" To sweet philosophy the studious day;
 " What time pale Autumn shades the silent eve;
 " Musing I rov'd Of good and evil much;
 " And much of mortal man; my thought revolv'd;
 " When starting full on Fancy's gushing eye
 " The mournful image of Parthenia's fate
 " That hour, O long belov'd and long deplor'd!
 " When blooming youth nor gentlest Wisdom's arts,
 " Nor Hymen's honours gather'd for thy brow,
 " Nor all thy lover's, all thy father's tears,
 " Avail'd to snatch thee from the cruel grave,
 " Thy agonizing looks, thy last farewell,
 " Struck to the inmost feeling of my soul
 " As with the hand of Death! At once the shade
 " More horrid nodded o'er me, and the winds
 " With hoarser murm'ring shook the branches. Dark
 " As midnight storms the scene of human things
 " Appear'd before me; deserts, burning sands,
 " Where the parch'd adder dies; the frozen south,
 " And desolation blasting all the west
 " With rapine and with murder: tyrant Pow'r
 " Here sits enthron'd with blood; the baleful charms
 " Of Superstition there infect the skies,
 " And turn the sun to horror. Gracious Heav'n!
 " What is the life of man? or cannot these,
 " Not these portents, thy awful will suffice?
 " That propagated thus beyond their scope
 " They rise to act their cruelties anew

"In my afflicted bosom, thus decreed
 "The universal sensitive of pain,
 "The wretched heir of evils not its own
 "Thus I impatient; when at once effus'd 220
 "A flashing torrent of celestial day
 "Burst thro' the shadowy void: With slow descent
 "A purple cloud came floating thro' the sky,
 "And pois'd at length within the circling trees
 "Hung obvious to my view, till opening wide 225
 "Its lucid orb a more than human form
 "Emerging lean'd majestic o'er my head,
 "And instant thunder shook the conscious grove;
 "Then melted into air the liquid cloud,
 "And all the shining vision stood reveal'd 230
 "A wreath of palm his ample forehead bound,
 "And o'er his shoulder mantling to his knee
 "Flow'd the transparent robe, around his waist
 "Collected with a radiant zone of gold
 "Ethereal; these in mystick signs engrav'd 235
 "I read his office high and sacred name,
 "Genius of Humankind: Appall'd I gaz'd
 "The godlike presence, for athwart his brow
 "Displeasure temper'd with a mild concern
 "Look'd down reluctant on me, and his words 240
 "Like distant thunders broke the murmur'ing air."
 "Vain are thy thoughts, O Child of mortal birth!
 "And impotent thy tongue. Is thy short span
 "Capacious of this universal frame?

- “Thy wisdom allsufficient? Thou, alas! 245
“Dost thou aspire to judge between the Lord
“Of Nature and his works? to lift thy voice
“Against the sovran order he decreed,
“All good and lovely? to blaspheme the bands
“Of tenderness innate and social love, 250
“Holiest of things! by which the gen’ral orb
“Of being, as by adamantine links,
“Was drawn to perfect union, and sustain’d
“From everlasting? Hast thou felt the pangs
“Of soft’ning sorrow, of indignant zeal, 255
“So grievous to the soul as thence to wish
“The ties of Nature broken from thy frame,
“That so thy selfish unrelenting heart
“Might cease to mourn its lot no longer then
“The wretched heir of evils not its own? 260
“O fair benevolence of gen’rous minds!
“O man by Nature form’d for all mankind!
“He spoke; abash’d and silent I remain’d,
“As conscious of my tongue’s offence, and aw’d
“Before his presence, tho’ my secret soul 265
“Disdain’d the imputation: On the ground
“I fix’d my eyes, till from his airy couch
“He stoop’d sublime, and touching with his hand
“My dazzling forehead, “Raise thy sight,” he cry’d,
“And let thy sense convince thy erring tongue.” 270
“I look’d, and lo! the former scene was chang’d;
“For verdant alleys and surrounding trees

" A solitary prospect wide and wild
" Rush'd on my senses. 'Twas an horrid pile
" Of hills with many a shaggy forest mix'd, 275
" With many a fable cliff and glitt'ring stream.
" Aloft recumbent o'er the hanging ridge [springs
" The brown woods wav'd, while ever-trickling
" Wash'd from the naked roots of oak and pine
" The crumbling soil, and still at ev'ry fall 280
" Down the steep windings of the channell'd rock
" Remurm'ring rush'd the congregated floods
" With hoarser inundation, till at last
" They reach'd a grassy plain which from the skirts
" Of that high desert spread her verdant lap, 285
" And drank the gushing moisture, where confin'd
" In one smooth current o'er the lili'd vale
" Clearer than glass it flow'd. Autumnal spoils
" Luxuriant spreading to the rays of morn
" Blush'd o'er the cliffs, whose half-encircling mound
" As in a sylvan theatre enclos'd 291
" That flow'ry level. On the river's brink
" I spy'd a fair pavilion, which diffus'd
" Its floating umbrage 'mid the silver shade
" Of osiers. Now the western sun reveal'd 295
" Between two parting cliffs his golden orb,
" And pour'd across the shadow of the hills
" On rocks and floods a yellow stream of light
" That cheer'd the solemn scene. My list'ning pow'rs
" Were aw'd, and ev'ry thought in silence hung 300

“ And wond’ring expectation then the voice

“ Of that celestial pow’r the mystick show

“ Declaring, thus my deep attention call’d:

“ Inhabitant of earth, to whom is giv’n

“ *Y-304. Inhabitant of earth, &c.*] The account of the economy of Providence here introduced, as the most proper to

calm and satisfy the mind when under the compunction of

private evils, seems to have come originally from the Pytha-

gorcan school; but of the ancient philosophers Plato has most

largely insisted upon it, has established it with all the strength

of his capacious understanding, and ennobled it with all the

magnificence of his divine imagination. He has one passage so

full and clear on this head that I am persuaded the reader will

be pleased to see it here tho’ somewhat long. Addressing him-

self to such as are not satisfied concerning divine Providence;

“ The being who presides over the whole,” says he, “ has dis-

“ posed and complicated all things for the happiness and vir-

“ tue of the whole, every part of which, according to the ex-

“ tent of its influence, does and suffers what is fit and proper.

“ One of these parts is your’s. O unhappy man! which tho’ in

“ itself most inconsiderable and minute, yet being connected

“ with the universe ever seeks to cooperate with that supreme

“ order. You in the mean-time are ignorant of the very end

“ for which all particular natures are brought into existence,

“ that the all-comprehending nature of the whole may be

“ perfect and happy; existing as it does not for your sake,

“ but the cause and reason of your existence, which, as in the

“ symmetry of every artificial work, must of necessity concur

“ with the general design of the artist, and be subservient to

“ the whole, of which it is a part. Your complaint therefore

“ is ignorant and groundless, since according to the various

“ energy of creation and the common laws of Nature there is

“ a constant provision of that which is best at the same time

“ for you and for the whole.—For the governing Intelligence

“ clearly beholding all the actions of animated and self-mov-

“ ing creatures, and that mixture of good and evil which

* The gracious ways of Providence to learn, 305
 " Receive my sayings with a stedfast ear.—
 " Know then the Sovran Spirit of the world,
 " Tho' self-collected from eternal time
 " Within his own deep essence he beheld
 " The bounds of true felicity complete, 310
 " Yet by immense benignity inclin'd
 " To spread around him that primeval joy
 " Which fill'd himself, he rais'd his plastick arm
 " And sounded thro' the hollow depth of space

" verifies them, considered first of all by what disposition of
 " things, and by what situation of each individual in the ge-
 " neral system, vice might be depressed and subdued, and vir-
 " tue made secure of victory and happiness, with the greatest
 " facility, and in the highest degree possible: in this manner
 " he ordered through the entire circle of being the internal
 " constitution of every mind, where should be its station in the
 " universal fabrick, and through what variety of circumstan-
 " ces it should proceed in the whole tenour of its existence."
 He goes on in his sublime manner to assert a future state of re-
 tribution, "as well for those who by the exercise of good dis-
 positions being harmonized and assimilated into the divine
 " virtue, are consequently removed to a place of unblemished
 " sanctity and happiness, as of those who by the most flagitious
 " arts have risen from contemptible beginnings to the greatest
 " affluence and power, and whom you therefore look upon as
 " unanswerable instances of negligence in the gods, because
 " you are ignorant of the purposes to which they are subser-
 " vient, and in what manner they contribute to that supreme
 " intention of good to the whole." *Plato de Leg. x. 16.*

This theory has been delivered of late especially abroad, in
 a manner which subverts the freedom of human actions;
 whereas Plato appears very careful to preserve it, and has been
 in that respect imitated by the best of his followers.

"The strong creative mandate; straight arose 315
 "These heav'nly orbs, the glad abodes of life
 "Effusive kindled by his breath divine
 "Thro' endless forms of being: each inhal'd
 "From him its portion of the vital flame,
 "In measure such that from the wide complex 320
 "Of coexistent orders one might rise,
 "One order, all-involving and entire.
 "He too beholding in the sacred light
 "Of his essential reason all the shapes
 "Of swift contingency, all successive ties 325
 "Of action propagated thro' the sum
 "Of possible existence, he at once
 "Down the long series of eventful time
 "So fix'd the dates of being, so dispos'd
 "To ev'ry living soul of ev'ry kind 330
 "The field of motion and the hour of rest,
 "That all conspir'd to his supreme design,
 "To universal good; with full accord
 "Answ'ring the mighty model he had chosen,
 "The best and fairest of unnumber'd worlds 335

v. 321. — *one might rise—One order, &c.*] See *The Meditations of Antoninus*, and *The Characteristicks*, *passim*.

v. 335. *The best and fairest, &c.*] This opinion is so old that Plin^{ius} Locrus calls the Supreme Being *δημιουργὸς τὸ βέλτιον*, "The Artificer of that which is best;" and represents him as resolving in the beginning to produce the most excellent work, and as copying the world most exactly from his own intelligible and essential idea; "so that it yet remains as it was at first, perfect in beauty, and will never stand in

"That lay from everlasting in the store
 "Of his divine conceptions. Nor content
 "By one exertion of creative pow'r
 "His goodness to reveal, thro' ev'ry age,
 "Thro' ev'ry moment up the track of time, 340
 "His parent hand with ever-new increase
 "Of happiness and virtue has adorn'd
 "The vast harmonious frame: his parent hand
 "From the mute shellfish gasping on the shore
 "To men, to angels, to celestial minds, 345
 "For ever leads the generations on
 "To higher scenes of being, while supply'd
 "From day to day with his enliv'ning breath
 "Inferiour orders in succession rise
 "To fill the void below. As flame ascends, 350
 "As bodies to their proper centre move,
 "As the pois'd ocean to th' attracting moon
 "Obedient swells, and ev'ry headlong stream
 "Devolves its winding waters to the main,
 "So all things which have life aspire to God, 355
 "The fan of being, boundless, unimpair'd,

"need of any correction or improvement." There can be no room for a caution here to understand the expressions not of any particular circumstances of human life separately considered, but of the sum or universal system of life and being. See also *The Vision* at the end of *The Theodicee* of Leibnitz.

v. 350. *As flame ascends, &c.*] This opinion, though not held by Plato nor any of the Ancients, is yet a very natural consequence of his principles: but the disquisition is too complex and extensive to be entered upon here.

- “ Centre of souls! Nor does the faithful voice
“ Of Nature cease to prompt their eager steps
“ Aright, nor is the care of Heav’n withheld
“ From granting to the task proportion’d aid, 360
“ That in their stations all may persevere
“ To climb th’ ascent of being, and approach
“ For ever nearer to the life divine.
“ That rocky pile thou seest, that verdant lawn,
“ Fresh water’d from the mountains. Let the scene
“ Paint in thy fancy the primeval seat 366
“ Of man, and where the Will Supreme ordain’d
“ His mansion, that pavilion fair diffus’d
“ Along the shady brink, in this recess
“ To wear th’ appointed season of his youth, 370
“ Till riper hours should open to his toil
“ The high communion of superiour minds,
“ Of consecrated heroes and of gods.
“ Nor did the Sire Omnipotent forget
“ His tender bloom to cherish, nor withheld 375
“ Celestial footsteps from his green abode:
“ Oft’ from the radiant honours of his throne
“ He sent whom most he lov’d, the Sovran Fair,
“ The effluence of his glory, whom he plac’d
“ Before his eyes for ever to behold, 380
“ The goddesses from whose inspiration flows
“ The toil of patriots, the delight of friends,
“ Without whose work divine in heav’n or earth
“ Nought lovely, nought propitious, comes to pass,

"Nor hope, nor praise, nor honour! Her the Sire
 "Gave it in charge to rear the blooming mind, 386
 "The folded pow'rs to open, to direct
 "The growth luxuriant of his young desires,
 "And from the laws of this majestick world
 "To teach him what was good. As thus the nymph
 "Her daily care attended, by her side 391
 "With constant steps her gay companion stay'd,
 "The fair Euphrosyne! the gentle queen
 "Of smiles, and graceful gladness, and delights
 "That cheer alike the hearts of mortal men 395
 "And pow'rs immortal. See the shining Pair
 "Behold where from his dwelling now disclos'd
 "They quit their youthful charge and seek the skies."
 "I look'd, and on the flow'ry turf there stood
 "Between two radiant forms a smiling youth 400
 "Whose tender cheeks display'd the vernal flow'r
 "Of beauty, sweetest innocence illum'd
 "His bashful eyes, and on his polish'd brow
 "Sat young Simplicity. With fond regard
 "He view'd th' associates as their steps they mov'd;
 "The younger chief his ardent eyes detain'd, 406
 "With mild regret invoking her return:
 "Bright as the star of ev'ning she appear'd
 "Amid the dusky scene: eternal youth
 "O'er all her form its glowing honours breath'd,
 "And smiles eternal from her candid eyes 411
 "Flow'd like the dewy lustre of the morn

“ Effusive trembling on the placid waves:
“ The spring of heav’n had shed its blushing spoils
“ To bind her sable tresses; full diffus’d 415
“ Her yellow mantle floated in the breeze,
“ And in her hand she wav’d a living branch
“ Rich with immortal fruits of pow’r to calm
“ The wrathful heart, and from the bright’ning eyes
“ To chase the cloud of sadness. More sublime 420
“ The heav’nly partner mov’d: the prime of age
“ Compos’d her steps: the presence of a god,
“ High on the circle of her brow enthron’d,
“ From each majestick motion darted awe,
“ Devoted awe! till cherish’d by her looks, 425
“ Benevolent and meek, confiding love
“ To filial rapture soften’d all the soul.
“ Free in her graceful hand she pois’d the sword
“ Of chaste dominion: an heroick crown
“ Display’d the old simplicity of pomp 430
“ Around her honour’d head: a matron’s robe
“ White as the sunshine streams thro’ vernal clouds
“ Her stately form invested. Hand in hand
“ Th’ immortal pair forsook th’ enamell’d green,
“ Ascending slowly: rays of limpid light 435
“ Gleam’d round their path; celestial sounds were
“ And thro’ the fragrant air ethereal dews [heard,
“ Distill’d around them, till at once the clouds
“ Disparting wide in midway sky withdrew
“ Their airy veil, and left a bright expanse 440

"Of empyrean flame, where spent and drown'd"
"Afflicted vision plung'd in vain to scan"
"What object it involv'd. My feeble eyes"
"Endur'd not. Bending down to earth I stood"
"With dumb attention. Soon a female voice, 445"
"As war'ry murmurs sweet or warbling shades,"
"With sacred invocation thus began :"
"Father of gods and mortals! whose right arm"
"With reins eternal guides the moving heav'ns,"
"Bend thy propitious ear : behold wellpleas'd 450"
"I seek to finish thy divine decree."
"With frequent steps I visit yonder seat"
"Of man, thy offspring, from the tender seeds"
"Of justice and of wisdom to evolve"
"The latent honours of his gen'rous frame, 455"
"Till thy conducting hand shall raise his lot"
"From earth's dim scene to these ethereal walks,"
"The temple of thy glory. But not me,"
"Not my directing voice, he oft' requires,"
"Or hears delighted : this enchanting maid, 460"
"Th' associate thou hast giv'n me, her alone"
"He loves, O Father! absent her he craves ;"
"And but for her glad presence ever join'd"
"Rejoices not in mine ; that all my hopes"
"This thy benignant purpose to fulfil 465"
"I deem uncertain, and my daily cares"
"Unfruitful all and vain, unless by thee"
"Still farther aided in the work divine."

"She ceas'd; a voice more awful thus reply'd:"
 "O thou! in whom for ever I delight, 470
 "Fairer than all th' inhabitants of heav'n,
 "Best image of thy Author! far from thee
 "Be disappointment, or distaste, or blame,
 "Who soon or late shalt ev'ry work fulfil,
 "And no resistance find. If man refuse 475
 "To hearken to thy dictates, or allur'd
 "By meaner joys to any other pow'r
 "Transfer the honours due to thee alone,
 "That joy which he pursues he ne'er shall taste,
 "That pow'r in whom delighteth ne'er behold. 480
 "Go then once more, and happy be thy toil;
 "Go then, but let not this thy smiling friend
 "Partake thy footsteps. In her stead, behold
 "With thee the son of Nemesis I send,
 "The fiend abhorr'd! whose vengeance takes account
 "Of sacred Order's violated laws. 486
 "See where he calls thee, burning to be gone,
 "Fierce to exhaust the tempest of his wrath
 "On yon' devoted head. But thou, my Child!
 "Control his cruel phrensy, and protect
 "Thy tender charge, that when despair shall grasp 490
 "His agonizing bosom he may learn,
 "Then he may learn, to love the gracious hand
 "Alone sufficient in the hour of ill
 "To save his feeble spirit; then confess 495
 "Thy genuine honours, O excelling Fair!

"When all the plagues that wait the deadly will
"Of this avenging demon, all the storms
"Of night infernal, serve but to display
"Th' energy of thy superiour charms 500
"With mildest awe triumphant o'er his rage,
"And shining clearer in the horrid gloom."
"Here ceas'd that awful voice, and soon I felt
"The cloudy curtain of refreshing eve
"Was clos'd once more, from that immortal fire
"Shelt'ring my eyelids. Looking up I view'd 506
"A vast gigantick spectre striding on
"Thro' murmur'ing thunders and a waste of clouds
"With dreadful action. Black as night his brow
"Relentless frowns involv'd: his savage limbs 510
"With sharp impatience violent he writh'd
"As thro' convulsive anguish; and his hand,
"Arm'd with a scorpion lash, full oft' he rais'd
"In madness to his bosom; while his eyes
"Rain'd bitter tears, and bellowing loud he shook
"The void with horror. Silent by his side 516
"The virgin came; no discomposure stirr'd
"Her features; from the glooms which hung around
"No stain of darkness mingled with the beam
"Of her divine effulgence. Now they stoop 520
"Upon the river bank, and now to hail
"His wonted guests with eager steps advanc'd
"The unsuspecting inmate of the shade.
"As when a famish'd wolf that all night long

“ Had rang’d the Alpine snows by chance at morn
“ Sees from a cliff incumbent o’er the smoke 526
“ Of some lone village a neglected kid
“ That strays along the wild for herb or spring,
“ Down from the winding ridge he sweeps amain,
“ And thinks he tears him; so with tenfold rage 530
“ The monster sprung remorseless on his prey.
“ Amaz’d the stripling stood; with panting breast
“ Feebly he pour’d the lamentable wail
“ Of helpless consternation, struck at once
“ And rooted to the ground. The queen beheld 535
“ His terror, and with looks of tend’rest care
“ Advanc’d to save him. Soon the tyrant felt
“ Her awful pow’r: his keen tempest’ous arm
“ Hung nerveless, nor descended where his rage
“ Had aim’d the deadly blow, then dumb retir’d
“ With fullen rancour. Lo! the sovran maid 541
“ Folds with a mother’s arms the fainting boy
“ Till life rekindles in his rosy cheek, [tongue:
“ Then grasps his hands and cheers him with her
“ O wake thee, rouse thy spirit! shall the spite
“ Of yon’ tormentor thus appal thy heart 546
“ While I thy friend and guardian am at hand
“ To rescue and to heal? O let thy soul
“ Remember what the will of Heav’n ordains
“ Is ever good for all, and if for all 550
“ Then good for thee. Nor only by the warmth
“ And soothing sunshine of delightful things

"Do minds grow up and flourish. Oft' misled
 "By that bland light the young unpractis'd views
 "Of reason wander thro' a fatal road, 555
 "Far from their native aim, as if to lie
 "Inglorious in the fragrant shade, and wait
 "The soft access of ever-circling joys,
 "Were all the end of being. Ask thyself,
 "This pleasing error did it never lull 560
 "Thy wishes? has thy constant heart refus'd
 "The silken fetters of delicious ease?
 "Or when divine Euphrosyne appear'd
 "Within this dwelling, did not thy desires
 "Hang far below the measure of thy fate 565
 "Which I reveal'd before thee? and thy eyes
 "Impatient of my counsels turn away
 "To drink the soft effusion of her smiles?
 "Know then for this the Everlasting Sire
 "Deprives thee of her presence, and instead, 570
 "O wise and still benevolent! ordains
 "This horrid visage hither to pursue
 "My steps, that so thy nature may discern
 "Its real good, and what alone can save
 "Thy feeble spirit in this hour of ill 575
 "From folly and despair. O yet lov'd!
 "Let not this headlong terror quite o'erwhelm
 "Thy scatter'd pow'rs, nor fatal deem the rage
 "Of this tormentor, nor his proud assault,
 "While I am here to vindicate thy toil, 580

“ Above the gen’rous question of thy arm.
“ Brave by thy fears, and in thy weakness strong,
“ This hour he triumphs; but confront his might
“ And dare him to the combat, then, with ease
“ Disarm’d and quell’d, his fierceness he resigns 383
“ To bondage and to scorn; while thus inur’d,
“ By watchful danger, by unceasing toil,
“ Th’ immortal mind superiour to his fate,
“ Amid the outrage of external things
“ Firm as the solid base of this great world, 390
“ Rests on his own foundations. Blow ye Winds!
“ Ye Waves! ye Thunders! rowl your tempest on,
“ Shake ye old Pillars of the marble sky!
“ Till all its orbs and all its worlds of fire
“ Be loosen’d from their seats; yet still serene 395
“ Th’ unconquer’d mind looks down upon the wreck,
“ And ever stronger as the storms advance
“ Firm thro’ the closing ruin holds his way
“ Where Nature calls him, to the destin’d goal.”
“ So spake the goddess, while thro’ all her frame
“ Celestial raptures flow’d, in ev’ry word, 601
“ In ev’ry motion, kindling warmth divine
“ To seize who listen’d. Vehement and swift
“ As lightning fires th’ aromatick shade
“ In Ethiopian fields the stripling felt 605
“ Her inspiration catch his fervid soul,
“ And starting from his languor thus exclaim’d:”
“ Then let the trial come! and witness thou

"If terroure be upon me, if I shrink
 "To meet the storm, or falter in my strength 610
 "When hardest it besets me. Do not think
 "That I am fearful and infirm of soul,
 "As late thy eyes beheld, for thou hast chang'd
 "My nature; thy commanding voice has wak'd
 "My languid pow'rs to bear me boldly on 615
 "Where'er the will divine my path ordains
 "Thro' toil or peril; only do not thou
 "Forfake me: O! be thou for ever near,
 "That I may listen to thy sacred voice,
 "And guide by thy decrees my constant feet. 620
 "But say, for ever are my eyes bereft?
 "Say, shall the fair Euphrosyne not once
 "Appear again to charm me? Thou in heav'n,
 "O thou Eternal Arbiter of things!
 "Be thy great bidding done; for who am I 625
 "To question thy appointment? Let the frowns
 "Of this avenger ev'ry morn o'ercast
 "The cheerful dawn, and ev'ry ev'ning damp
 "With double night my dwelling; I will learn
 "To hail them both, and unrepining bear 630
 "His hateful presence; but permit my tongue
 "One glad request, and if my deeds may find
 "Thy awful eye propitious, O restore
 "The rosy-featur'd maid again to cheer
 "This lonely seat, and bless me with her smiles!" 635
 "He spoke; when instant thro' the sable glooms

- “ With which that furious presence had involv’d
“ The ambient air a flood of radiance came
“ Swift as the lightning flash; the melting clouds
“ Flew diverse, and amid the blue serene 640
“ Euphrosyne appear’d. With sprightly step
“ The nymph alighted on th’ irrig’ous lawn,
“ And to her wond’ring audience thus began:”
“ Lo! I am here to answer to your vows,
“ And be the meeting fortunate! I come 645
“ With joyful tidings; we shall part no more.—
“ Hark how the gentle Echo from her cell
“ Talks thro’ the cliffs, and murm’ring o’er the stream
“ Repeats the accents, We shall part no more!
“ O my delightful Friends! wellpleas’d on high 650
“ The Father has beheld you while the might
“ Of that stern foe with bitter trial prov’d
“ Your equal doings; then for ever spake
“ The high decree, that thou, celestial Maid!
“ Howe’er that grisly phantom on thy steps 655
“ May sometimes dare intrude, yet never more
“ Shalt thou descending to th’ abode of man
“ Alone endure the rancour of his arm,
“ Or leave thy lov’d Euphrosyne behind.”
“ She ended, and the whole romantick scene 660
“ Immediate vanish’d; rocks, and woods, and rills,
“ The mantling tent, and each mysterious form
“ Flew like the pictures of a morning dream
“ When sunshine fills the bed. A while I stood

"Perplex'd and giddy, till the radiant pow'r 665
"Who had the visionary landscape rise,
"As up to him I turn'd with gentlest looks,
"Preventing my inquiry thus began:"
"There let thy soul acknowledge its complaint
"How blind, how impious! there behold the ways
"Of Heav'n's eternal destiny to man 675
"For ever just, benevolent, and wise,
"That Virtue's awful steps, howe'er pursu'd
"By vexing Fortune and intrusive Pain,
"Should never be divided from her chaste, 675
"Her fair, attendant Pleasure. Need I urge
"Thy tardy thought thro' all the various round
"Of this existence, that thy soft'ning soul
"At length may learn what energy the hand
"Of Virtue mingles in the bitter tide 680
"Of passion swelling with distress and pain,
"To mitigate the sharp with gracious drops
"Of cordial pleasure? Ask the faithful youth
"Why the cold urn of her whom long he lov'd
"So often fills his arms, so often draws 685
"His lonely footsteps at the silent hour
"To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
"O! he will tell thee that the wealth of worlds
"Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego
"That sacred hour when, stealing from the noise 690
"Of care and envy, sweet remembrance sooths
"With Virtue's kindest looks his aching breast,

“ And turns his tears to rapture.—Ask the crowd
“ Which flies impatient from the village walk
“ To climb the neighb’ring cliffs when far below 695
“ The cruel winds have hurl’d upon the coast
“ Some helpless bark, while sacred Pity melts
“ The gen’ral eye, or Terror’s icy hand
“ Smites their distorted limbs and horrent hair,
“ While ev’ry mother closer to her breast 700
“ Catches her child, and pointing where the waves
“ Foam thro’ the shatter’d vessel, shrieks aloud
“ As one poor wretch that spreads his piteous arms
“ For succour swallow’d by the roaring surge,
“ As now another dash’d against the rock 705
“ Drops lifeless down! O! deemst thou indeed
“ No kind endearment here by Nature giv’n
“ To mutual terror and Compassion’s tears?
“ No sweetly melting softness which attracts,
“ O’er all that edge of pain, the social pow’rs 710
“ To this their proper action and their end?
“ Ask thy own heart when at the midnight hour
“ Slow thro’ that studious gloom thy pausing eye,
“ Led by the glimm’ring taper, moves around
“ The sacred volumes of the dead, the songs 715
“ Of Grecian bards, and records writ by Fame
“ For Grecian heroes, where the present pow’r
“ Of heav’n and earth surveys th’ immortal page,
“ Ev’n as a father blessing while he reads
“ The praises of his son, if then thy soul, 720

" Spurning the yoke of these inglorious days,
" Mix in their deeds and kindle with their flame?
" Say, when the prospect blackens on thy view,
" When rooted from the base heroick states
" Mourn in the dust, and tremble at the frown 723
" Of curst Ambition; when the pious band
" Of youths who fought for freedom, and their fires,
" Lie side by side in gore; when ruffian Pride
" Usurps the throne of Justice, turns the pomp
" Of publick pow'r, the majesty of rule, 730
" The sword, the laurel, and the purple robe,
" To slavish empty pageants, to adorn
" A tyrant's walk, and glitter in the eyes
" Of such as bow the knee; when honour'd urns
" Of patriots and of chiefs, the awful bust 735
" And story'd arch, to glut the coward-rage
" Of regal envy strew the publick way
" With hallow'd ruins; when the Muses' haunt,
" The marble Porch where Wisdom wont to talk
" With Socrates or Tully, hears no more 740
" Save the hoarse jargon of contentious monks,
" Or female Superstition's midnight pray'r;
" When ruthless Rapine from the hand of Time
" Tears the destroying fiend, with surer blow
" To sweep the works of glory from their base, 745
" Till Desolation o'er the grass-grown street
" Expands his raven wings, and up the wall,
" Where senates once the price of monarchs doom'd

" Hisses the gliding snake thro' hoary weeds
 " That clasp the mould'ring column: thus defac'd,
 " Thus widely mournful when the prospect thrills 751
 " Thy beating bosom, when the patriot's tear
 " Starts from thine eye, and thy extended arm
 " In fancy hurls the thunderbolt of Jove
 " To fire the impious wreath on Philip's brow, 755
 " Or dash Octavius from the trophy'd car,
 " Say, does thy secret soul repine to taste
 " The big distress? or wouldst thou then exchange
 " Those heart-ennobling sorrows for the lot
 " Of him who sits amid the gaudy herd 760
 " Of mute Barbarians bending to his nod,
 " And bears aloft his gold-invested front,
 " And says within himself, " I am a king,
 " And wherefore should the clam'rous voice of Wo
 " Intrude upon mine ear?"—The baleful dregs 765
 " Of these late ages, this inglorious draught
 " Of servitude and folly, have not yet,
 " Blest be th' Eternal Ruler of the world!
 " Defil'd to such a depth of sordid shame
 " The native honours of the human soul,
 " Nor so effac'd the image of its Sire." 771

v. 755. *Philip.*] The Macedonian.

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BOOK III.

The Argument.

PLEASURE is observing the tempers and manners of men, even where vicious or absurd. The origin of vice, from false representations of the fancy producing false opinions concerning good and evil. Inquiry into ridicule. The general sources of ridicule in the minds and characters of men enumerated. Final cause of the sense of ridicule. The resemblance of certain aspects of inanimate things to the sensations and properties of the mind. The operations of the mind in the production of the works of Imagination described. The secondary Pleasure from imitation. The benevolent order of the world illustrated in the arbitrary connexion of these Pleasures with the objects which excite them. The nature and conduct of taste. Concluding with an account of the natural and moral advantages resulting from a sensible and wellformed Imagination.

WHAT wonder therefore since th' endearing ties
 Of passion link the universal kind
 Of man so close, what wonder if to search
 This common nature thro' the various change
 Of sex, and age, and fortune, and the frame
 Of each peculiar, draw the busy mind
 With unresisted charms? The spacious west
 And all the teeming regions of the south
 Hold not a quarry to the curious flight
 Of knowledge half so tempting or so fair
 As man to man; nor only where the smiles
 Of love invite, nor only where th' applause
 Of cordial honour turns th' attentive eye
 On Virtue's graceful deeds; for since the course

Of things external acts in diff'rent ways 15
 On human apprehensions, as the hand
 Of Nature temper'd to a diff'rent frame
 Peculiar minds, so haply where the pow'rs
 Of fancy neither lessen nor enlarge

§. 13. —[where the pow'rs—Of fancy, &c.] The influence of the Imagination on the conduct of life is one of the most important points in moral philosophy. It were easy by an induction of facts to prove that the Imagination directs almost all the passions, and mixes with almost every circumstance of action or pleasure. Let any man, even of the coldest head and soberest industry, analyze the idea of what he calls his Interest; he will find that it consists chiefly of certain degrees of decency, beauty, and order, variously combined into one system, the idol which he seeks to enjoy by labour, hazard, and self-denial. It is on this account of the last consequence to regulate these images by the standard of Nature and the general good, otherwise the Imagination, by heightening some objects beyond their real excellence and beauty, or by representing others in a more odious or terrible shape than they deserve, may of course engage us in pursuits utterly inconsistent with the moral order of things.

If it be objected that this account of things supposes the passions to be merely accidental, whereas there appears in some a natural and hereditary disposition to certain passions, prior to all circumstances of education or fortune, it may be answered, that though no man is born ambitious or a miser, yet he may inherit from his parents a peculiar temper or complexion of mind which shall render his Imagination more liable to be struck with some particular objects, consequently dispose him to form opinions of good and ill, and entertain passions of a particular turn. Some men, for instance, by the original frame of their minds are more delighted with the vast and magnificent, others, on the contrary, with the elegant and gentle aspects of Nature: and it is very remarkable that the

The images of things, but paint in all
 Their genuine hues the features which they wore
 In Nature, there opinion will be true
 And action right; for Action treads the path
 In which Opinion says he follows good
 Or flies from evil; and Opinion gives
 Report of good or evil as the scene
 Was drawn by Fancy, lovely or deform'd:
 Thus her report can never there be true

disposition of the moral powers is always similar to this of the Imagination; that those who are most inclined to admire prodigious and sublime objects in the physical world are also most inclined to applaud examples of fortitude and heroick virtue in the moral; while those who are charmed rather with the delicacy and sweetness of colours, and forms, and sounds, never fail, in like manner, to yield the preference to the softer scenes of virtue and the sympathies of a domestick life. And this is sufficient to account for the objection.

Among the ancient philosophers though we have several hints concerning this influence of the Imagination upon morals among the remains of the Socratick school, yet the Stoicks were the first who paid it a due attention. Zeno their founder thought it impossible to preserve any tolerable regularity in life without frequently inspecting those pictures or appearances of things which the Imagination offers to the mind. *Diag. Laert.* l. vii. The Meditations of M. Aurelius, and The Discourses of Epictetus, are full of the same sentiment, insomuch that the latter makes the $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma, \omicron\iota\alpha, \delta\epsilon\iota\ \pi\alpha\nu\lambda\alpha\sigma\iota\omega\alpha\nu$, or "right management of the fancies," the only thing for which we are accountable to Providence, and without which a man is no other than stupid or frantick. *Arrian.* l. i. c. 12. and l. ii. c. 22. See also *The Characteristicks*, vol. I. from p. 313 to 321, where this stoical doctrine is embellished with all the elegance and graces of Plato.

Where Fancy cheats the intellectual eye
With glaring colours and distorted lines. 30
Is there a man who at the sound of death
Sees ghastly shapes of terrour conjur'd up
And black before him, nought but death-bed groans!
And fearful pray'rs, and plunging from the brink
Of light and being down the gloomy air 35
An unknown depth? Alas! in such a mind
If no bright forms of excellence attend
The image of his country, nor the pomp
Of sacred senates, nor the guardian voice
Of Justice on her throne, nor aught that wakes 40
The conscious bosom with a patriot's flame,
Will not Opinion tell him that to die
Or stand the hazard is a greater ill
Than to betray his country? and in act
Will he not chuse to be a wretch and live? 45
Here vice begins then. From th' enchanting cup
Which Fancy holds to all th' unwary thirst
Of youth oft' swallows a Circean draught
That sheds a baleful tincture o'er the eye
Of Reason, till no longer he discerns, 50
And only guides to err; then revel forth
A furious band that spurn him from the throne,
And all is uproar. Thus Ambition grasps
The empire of the soul; thus pale Revenge
Unsheaths her murd'rous dagger; and the hands 55
Of Lust and Rapine with unholy arts

Watch to o'erturn the barrier of the laws
 That keeps them from their prey : thus all the plagues
 The wicked bear, or o'er the trembling scene
 The Tragick Muse discloses, under shapes
 Of honour, safety, pleasure, ease, or pomp,
 Stole first into the mind. Yet not by all
 Those lying forms which Fancy in the brain
 Engenders are the kindling passions driv'n
 To guilty deeds, nor Reason bound in chains,
 That Vice alone may lord it : oft' adorn'd
 With solemn pageants Folly mounts the throne,
 And plays her idiot anticks like a queen.
 A thousand garbs she wears, a thousand ways
 She wheels her giddy empire.—Lo ! thus far
 With bold adventure to the Mantuan lyre
 I sing of Nature's charms, and touch wellpleas'd
 A stricter note : now haply must my song
 Unbend her serious measure, and reveal
 In lighter strains how Folly's awkward arts

♪. 75. —*how Folly's awkward arts, &c.*] Notwithstanding the general influence of ridicule on private and civil life, as well as on learning and the sciences, it has been almost constantly neglected or misrepresented, by divines especially. The manner of treating these subjects in the science of human nature should be precisely the same as in natural philosophy, from particular facts to investigate the stated order in which they appear, and then apply the general law thus discovered to the explication of other appearances and the improvement of useful arts.

Excite impetuous Laughter's gay rebuke,
The sportive province of the Comick Muse.

See in what crowds the uncouth forms advance!
Each would outstrip the other, each prevent
Our careful search, and offer to your gaze
Unask'd his motley features. Wait a while
My curious Friends! and let us first arrange
In proper order your promiscuous throng.

Behold the foremost band, of slender thought
And easy faith, whom flatt'ring Fancy sooths
With lying spectres, in themselves to view
Illustrious forms of excellence and good,
That scorn the mansion. With exulting hearts
They spread their spurious treasures to the sun,
And bid the world admire! but chief the glance
Of wishful Envy draws their joy-bright eyes,
And lifts with selfapplause each lordly brow.

In number boundless as the blooms of spring
Behold their glaring idols, empty shades
By Fancy gilded o'er, and then set up
For adoration: some in Learning's garb,
With formal band, and fable-cinctur'd gown,
And rags of mouldy volumes; some, elate
With martial splendour, steely pikes and swords
Of costly frame, and gay Phœnician robes

¶. 84. *Behold the foremost band, &c.*] The first and most general source of ridicule in the characters of men is vanity or selfapplause for some desirable quality or possession which evidently does not belong to those who assume it.

Inwrought with flow'ry gold, assume the port
 Of stately Valour; list'ning by his side
 There stands a female form; to her with looks
 Of earnest import, pregnant with amaze,
 He talks of deadly deeds, of breaches, storms, 109
 And sulph'rous mines, and ambush! then at once
 Breaks off, and smiles to see her look so pale,
 And asks some wond'ring question of her fears!
 Others of graver mien; behold adorn'd
 With holy ensigns how sublime they move, 110
 And bending oft' their sanctimonious eyes
 Take homage of the simple-minded throng;
 Ambassadors of Heav'n! nor much unlike
 Is he whose visage in the lazy mist
 That mantles ev'ry feature hides a brood 115
 Of politick conceits, of whispers, nods,
 And hints deep omen'd with unwieldy schemes,
 And dark portents of state! Ten thousand more
 Prodigious habits and tumult'ous tongues
 Pour dauntless in and swell the boastful band. 120
 Then comes the second order, all who seek
 The debt of praise, where watchful Unbelief
 Darts thro' the thin pretence her squinting eye
 On some retir'd appearance which belies

♀. 121. *Then comes the second order, &c.]* Ridicule from the same vanity, where though the possession be real yet no merit can arise from it, because of some particular circumstances which, though obvious to the spectator, are yet overlooked by the ridiculous character.

The boasted virtue, or annuls th' applause 125
That Justice else would pay. Here side by side
I see two leaders of the solemn train
Approaching, one a female old and grey,
With eyes demure and wrinkle-furrow'd brow,
Pale as the cheeks of Death; yet still she stuns 130
The sick'ning audience with a nauseous tale:
How many youths her myrtle-chains have worn,
How many virgins at her triumphs pin'd!
Yet how resolv'd she guards her cautious heart!
Such is her terrour at the risks of love 135
And man's seducing tongue! the other seems
A bearded sage, ungentle in his mien,
And fordid all his habit; peevish Want
Grins at his heels, while down the gazing throng
He stalks, resounding in magnifick praise 140
The vanity of riches, the contempt
Of pomp and pow'r. Be prudent in your zeal
Ye grave Associates! let the silent grace
Of her who blushes at the fond regard
Her charms inspire more eloquent unfold 145
The praise of spotless honour: let the man
Whose eye regards not his illustrious pomp
And ample store but as indulgent streams
To cheer the barren soil and spread the fruits
Of joy, let him by juster measures fix 150
The price of riches and the end of pow'r.

Another tribe succeeds; deluded long
 By Fancy's dazzling opticks these behold
 The images of some peculiar things
 With brighter hues resplendent, and portray'd 155
 With features nobler far than e'er adorn'd
 Their genuine objects: hence the fever'd heart
 Pants with delirious hope for tinsel charms,
 Hence oft' obtrusive on the eye of Scorn
 Untimely Zeal her witless pride betrays, 160
 And serious Manhood from the tow'ring aim
 Of Wisdom stoops to emulate the boast
 Of childish Toil. Behold yon' mystick form
 Bedeck'd with feathers, insects, weeds, and shells!
 Not with intenser view the Samian sage 165
 Bent his fixt eye on heav'n's intenser fires,
 When first the order of that radiant scene
 Swell'd his exulting thought, than this surveys
 A muckworm's entrails or a spider's fang.
 Next him a youth with flow'rs and myrtles crown'd
 Attends that virgin form, and blushing knees, 171
 With fondest gesture and a suppliant's tongue,
 To win her coy regard. Adieu for him
 The dull engagements of the bustling world!
 Adieu the sick impertinence of praise, 175
 And hope and action! for with her alone

*v. 152. *Another tribe succeeds, &c.*] Ridicule from a notion
 of excellence in particular objects disproportioned to their in-
 trinsic value, and inconsistent with the order of Nature.

By streams and shades to steal these sighing hours
 Is all he asks, and all that Fate can give!
 Thee too, facetious Momion! wand'ring here,
 Thee, dreaded Cenfor! oft' have I beheld 180
 Bewilder'd unawares: alas! too long
 Flush'd with thy comick triumphs and the spoils
 Of sly Derision! till on ev'ry side
 Hurling thy random bolts offended Truth
 Assign'd thee here thy station with the slaves 185
 Of Folly. Thy once formidable name
 Shall grace her humble records, and be heard
 In scoffs and mock'ry bandy'd from the lips
 Of all the vengeful brotherhood around,
 So oft' the patient victims of thy scorn. 190

But now ye Gay! to whom indulgent Fate
 Of all the Muses' empire hath assign'd
 The fields of folly, hither each advance
 Your sickles; here the teeming soil affords
 Its richest growth. A fav'rite brood appears, 195
 In whom the demon with a mother's joy
 Views all her charms reflected, all her cares
 At full repaid. Ye most illustr'ous Band!
 Who, scorning Reason's tame pedantick rules
 And Order's vulgar bondage, never meant 200
 For souls sublime as yours, with gen'rous zeal

¶. 191. *But now ye Gay! &c.*] Ridicule from a notion of excellence, when the object is absolutely odious or contemptible. This is the highest degree of the ridiculous, as in the affectation of diseases or vices.

Pay Vice the rev'rence Virtue long usurp'd,
 And yield Deformity the fond applause
 Which Beauty wont to claim, forgive my song,
 That for the blushing diffidence of youth
 It shuns th' unequal province of your praise.

Thus far triumphant in the pleasing guile
 Of bland Imagination Folly's train
 Have dar'd our search; but now a dastard kind
 Advance reluctant, and with salt'ring feet
 Shrink from the gazer's eye: enfeebled hearts!
 Whom Fancy chills with visionary fears,
 Or bends to servile tameness with conceits
 Of shame, of evil, or of base defect,
 Fantaſtick and delusive. Here the slave
 Who droops abash'd when sullen Pomp surveys
 His humbler habit; here the trembling wretch,
 Unnerv'd and struck with Terror's icy bolts,
 Spent in weak wailings, drown'd in shameful tears,
 At ev'ry dream of danger; here, subdu'd
 By frontless Laughter and the hardy scorn
 Of old unfeeling Vice, the abject soul
 Who, blushing, half resigns the candid praise
 Of temp'rance and honour, half disowns
 A freeman's hatred of tyrannick pride,
 And hears with sickly smiles the venal mouth
 With foulest licence mock the patriot's name.

¶ 207. *Thus far triumphant, &c.*] Ridicule from false shame
 or groundless fear.

Last of the motley bands on whom the pow'r
 Of gay Derision bends her hostile aim
 Is that where shameful Ignorance presides. 230
 Beneath her fordid banners, lo! they march
 Like blind and lame. Whate'er their doubtful hands
 Attempt Confusion straight appears behind
 And troubles all the work. Thro' many a maze
 Perplex'd they struggle, changing ev'ry path, 235
 O'erturning ev'ry purpose, then at last
 Sit down dismay'd, and leave th' entangled scene
 For Scorn to sport with. Such then is th' abode
 Of Folly in the mind, and such the shapes
 In which she governs her obsequious train. 240
 Thro' ev'ry scene of ridicule in things
 To lead the tenour of my devot'd lay,
 Thro' ev'ry swift occasion which the hand
 Of Laughter points at when the mirthful sting
 Distends her sallying nerves and chokes her tongue,
 What were it but to count each crystal drop 240
 Which Morning's dewy fingers on the blooms
 Of May distil? Suffice it to have said

v. 228. *Last of the, &c.*] Ridicule from the ignorance of such things as our circumstances require us to know.

v. 248. — *Suffice it to have said, &c.*] By comparing these general sources of ridicule with each other, and examining the ridiculous in other objects, we may obtain a general definition of it equally applicable to every species. The most important circumstance of this definition is laid down in the lines referred to, but others more minute we shall subjoin here. A-

Where'er the pow'r of Ridicule displays
Her quaint-ey'd visage some incongr'ous form, 1250

Aristotle's account of the matter seems both imperfect and false; τὸ γὰρ γελοῖον, says he, ἐστὶν ἀμάρτυμα καὶ αἰσχρὸν ἀνόδυνον καὶ ἰφθαρμικόν: "The ridiculous is some certain fault or turpitude without pain, and not destructive to its subject." *Poet.* c. 5. For allowing it to be true, as it is not, that the ridiculous is never accompanied with pain; yet we might produce many instances of such a fault or turpitude which cannot with any tolerable propriety be called ridiculous, so that the definition does not distinguish the thing designed. Nay, farther, even when we perceive the turpitude tending to the destruction of its subject we may still be sensible of a ridiculous appearance till the ruin become imminent, and the keener sensations of pity or terror banish the ludicrous apprehension from our minds; for the sensation of ridicule is not a bare perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas, but a passion or emotion of the mind consequential to that perception; so that the mind may perceive the agreement or disagreement, and yet not feel the ridiculous, because it is engrossed by a more violent emotion. Thus it happens that some men think those objects ridiculous to which others cannot endure to apply the name, because in them they excite a much intenser and more important feeling; and this difference, among other causes, has brought a good deal of confusion into this question.

"That which makes objects ridiculous is some ground of
"admiration or esteem connected with other more general
"circumstances comparatively worthless or deformed; or it
"is some circumstance of turpitude or deformity connected
"with what is in general excellent or beautiful; the inconsistent properties existing either in the objects themselves,
"or in the apprehension of the person to whom they relate,
"belonging always to the same order or class of being, implying sentiment or design, and exciting no acute or vehement
"emotion of the heart."

Some stubborn dissonance of things combin'd,
Strikes on the quick observer, whether Pomp,

To prove the several parts of this definition: "The appearance of excellence or beauty connected with a general condition comparatively fordid or deformed" is ridiculous: for instance, pompous pretensions of wisdom, joined with ignorance or folly, in the Socrates of Aristophanes, and the ostentations of military glory with cowardice and stupidity, in the Thrafo of Terence.

"The appearance of deformity or turpitude in conjunction with what is in general excellent or venerable" is also ridiculous: for instance, the personal weaknesses of a magistrate appearing in the solemn and publick functions of his station.

"The incongruous properties may either exist in the objects themselves, or in the apprehension of the person to whom they relate:" in the last mentioned instance they both exist in the objects; in the instances from Aristophanes and Terence one of them is objective and real, the other only founded in the apprehension of the ridiculous character.

"The inconsistent properties must belong to the same order or class of being." A coxcomb in fine clothes bedaubed by accident in foul weather is a ridiculous object; because his general apprehension of excellence and esteem is referred to the splendour and expense of his dress. A man of sense and merit in the same circumstances is not counted ridiculous, because the general ground of excellence and esteem in him is, both in fact and in his own apprehension, of a very different species.

"Every ridiculous object implies sentiment or design." A column placed by an architect without a capital or base is laughed at; the same column in a ruin causes a very different sensation.

And, lastly, "the occurrence must excite no acute or vehement emotion of the heart," such as terror, pity, or indignation; for in that case, as was observed above, the mind is not at leisure to contemplate the ridiculous.

Whether any appearance not ridiculous be involved in this

Or Praise, or Beauty, mix their partial claim,
 Where sordid fashions, where ignoble deeds,
 Where foul Deformity, are wont to dwell, 255
 Or whether these with violation loth'd
 Invade resplendent Pomp's imperious mien,
 The charms of Beauty or the boast of Praise.

Ask we for what fair end th' Almighty Sire
 description, and whether it comprehend every species and
 form of the ridiculous, must be determined by repeated appli-
 cations of it to particular instances.

V. 259. *Ask we for what fair end, &c.*] Since it is beyond
 all contradiction evident that we have a natural sense or feel-
 ing of the ridiculous, and since so good a reason may be assign-
 ed to justify the Supreme Being for bestowing it, one cannot
 without astonishment reflect on the conduct of those men who
 imagine it is for the service of true religion to vilify and black-
 en it without distinction, and endeavour to persuade us that
 it is never applied but in a bad cause. Ridicule is not con-
 cerned with mere speculative truth or falsehood. It is not in
 abstract propositions or theorems, but in actions and passions,
 good and evil, beauty and deformity, that we find materials
 for it; and all these terms are relative, implying approbation
 or blame. To ask them whether ridicule be a test of truth is,
 in other words, to ask whether that which is ridiculous can be
 morally true, can be just and becoming; or whether that which
 is just and becoming can be ridiculous: a question that does not
 deserve a serious answer; for it is most evident that, as in a me-
 taphysical proposition offered to the understanding for its assent,
 the faculty of reason examines the terms of the proposition, and
 finding one Idea which was supposed equal to another to be
 in fact unequal, of consequence rejects the proposition as a
 falsehood: so in objects offered to the mind for its esteem or
 applause the faculty of ridicule finding an incongruity in the
 claim urges the mind to reject it with laughter and contempt.
 When therefore we observe such a claim obtruded upon man-

In mortal bosoms wakes this gay contempt, 1260
 These grateful stings of laughter, from disgust
 Educating pleasure? Wherefore but to aid

kind, and the inconsistent circumstances carefully concealed from the eye of the publick, it is our business, if the matter be of importance to society, to drag out those latent circumstances, and by setting them in full view to convince the world how ridiculous the claim is: and thus a double advantage is gained, for we both detect the moral falsehood sooner than in the way of speculative inquiry, and impress the minds of men with a stronger sense of the vanity and error of its authors. And this and no more is meant by the application of ridicule.

But it is said the practice is dangerous, and may be inconsistent with the regard we owe to objects of real dignity and excellence. I answer, the practice fairly managed can never be dangerous: men may be dishonest in obtruding circumstances foreign to the object, and we may be inadvertent in allowing those circumstances to impose upon us; but the sense of ridicule always judges right. The Socrates of Aristophanes is as truly ridiculous a character as ever was drawn: --- true; but it is not the character of Socrates, the divine moralist, and father of ancient wisdom. What then? did the ridicule of the poet hinder the philosopher from detecting and disclaiming those foreign circumstances which he had falsely introduced into his character, and thus rendered the satire doubly ridiculous in his turn? No; but it nevertheless had an ill influence on the minds of the people. And so has the reasoning of Spinoza made many Atheists: he has founded it indeed on suppositions utterly false; but allow him these and his conclusions are unavoidably true. And if we must reject the use of ridicule because by the imposition of false circumstances things may be made to seem ridiculous which are not so in themselves, why we ought not in the same manner to reject the use of reason, because by proceeding on false principles conclusions will appear true which are impossible in nature, let the vehement and obstinate declaimers against ridicule determine.

The tardy steps of Reason, and at once
 By this prompt impulse urge us to depress
 The giddy aims of Folly? Tho' the light 265
 Of truth slow dawning on th' inquiring mind
 At length unfolds thro' many a subtle tie
 How these uncouth disorders end at last
 In publick evil, yet benignant Heav'n,
 Conscious how dim the dawn of truth appears 270
 To thousands, conscious what a scanty pause
 From labours and from care the wider lot
 Of humble life affords for studious thought
 To scan the maze of Nature, therefore stamp'd
 The glaring scenes with characters of scorn 275
 As broad, as obvious, to the passing clown
 As to the letter'd sage's curious eye.

Such are the various aspects of the mind.—
 Some heav'nly genius whose unclouded thoughts
 Attain that secret harmony which blends 280
 Th' æthereal spirit with its mould of clay,
 O! teach me to reveal the grateful charm
 That searchless Nature o'er the sense of man
 Diffuses, to behold in lifeless things
 The inexpressive semblance of himself, 285
 Of thought and passion; mark the sable woods
 That shade sublime yon' mountain's nodding brow;

✱. 285. *The inexpressive semblance, &c.*] This similitude is
 the foundation of almost all the ornaments of poetick diction.

With what religious awe the solemn scene
Commands your steps! as if the rev'rend form
Of Minos or of Numa should forsake 290
Th' Elysian seats, and down th' embow'ring glade
Move to your pausing eye! behold th' expanse
Of yon' gay landscape, where the silver clouds
Flit o'er the heav'ns before the sprightly breeze;
Now their grey cincture skirts the doubtful sun, 295
Now streams of splendour thro' their op'ning veil
Effulgent sweep from off the gilded lawn
Th' aerial shadows on the curling brook
And on the shady margin's quiv'ring leaves
With quickest lustre glancing: while you view 300
The prospect, say, within your cheerful breast
Plays not the lively sense of winning Mirth
With clouds and sunshine checker'd, while the round
Of social converse to th' inspiring tongue
Of some gay nymph amid her subject train 305
Moves all obsequious? Whence is this effect,
This kindred pow'r of such discordant things?
Or flows their semblance from that mystick tone
To which the newborn mind's harmonious pow'rs
At first were strung? or rather from the links 310
Which artful Custom twines around her frame?
For when the diff'rent images of things
By Chance combin'd have struck th' attentive soul
With deeper impulse, or connected long
Have drawn her frequent eye, howe'er distinct 315

Th' external scenes, yet oft' the ideas gain
 From that conjunction an eternal tie
 And sympathy unbroken. Let the mind
 Recall one partner of the various league,
 Immediate, lo! the firm confed'rates rise, 320
 And each his former station straight resumes,
 One movement governs the consenting throng,
 And all at once with rosy pleasure shine,
 Or all are sadden'd with the glooms of care.
 'Twas thus, if ancient Fame the truth unfold, 325
 Two faithful needles from th' informing touch
 Of the same parent-stone together drew
 Its mystick virtue, and at first conspir'd
 With fatal impulse quiv'ring to the pole;
 Then tho' disjoin'd by kingdoms, tho' the main 330
 Rowl'd its broad surge betwixt, and diff'rent stars
 Beheld their wakeful motions, yet preserv'd
 The former friendship, and remember'd still
 Th' alliance of their birth: whate'er the line
 Which one possess'd nor pause nor quiet knew 335
 The sure associate ere with trembling speed
 He found its path, and fix'd unerring there.
 Such is the secret union when we feel
 A song, a flow'r, a name, at once restore
 Those long-connected scenes where first they mov'd

♪. 326. *Two faithful needles, &c.*] See the elegant poem
 recited by Cardinal Bembo in the character of Lucretius,
Strada Proluf. vi. Academ. 2. c. v.

Th' attention, backward thro' her mazy walks 341
 Guiding the wanton fancy to her scope,
 To temples, courts, or fields, with all the band
 Of painted forms, of passions and designs
 Attendant, whence if pleasing in itself 345
 The prospect from that sweet accession gains
 Redoubled influence o'er the list'ning mind.

By these mysterious ties the busy pow'r
 Of Mem'ry her ideal train preserves
 Entire, or when they would elude her watch 350
 Reclaims their fleeting footsteps from the waste
 Of dark oblivion; thus collecting all
 The various forms of being to present
 Before the curious aim of mimic Art
 Their largest choice, like spring's unfolded blooms,
 Exhaling sweetness that the skilful bee 356
 May taste at will from their selected spoils
 To work her dulcet food: for not th' expanse
 Of living lakes in summer's noontide calm
 Reflects the bord'ring shade and sunbright heav'ns
 With fairer semblance, not the sculptur'd gold 361
 More faithful keeps the graver's lively trace,
 Than he whose birth the sister pow'rs of Art
 Propitious view'd, and from his genial star
 Shed influence to the seeds of fancy kind, 365
 Than his attemper'd bosom must preserve

¶. 348. *By these mysterious ties, &c.*] The act of remembering seems almost wholly to depend on the association of ideas.

The seal of Nature; there alone unchang'd
Her form remains; the balmy walks of May
There breathe perennial sweets, the trembling chord
Resounds for ever in th' abstracted ear 370
Melodious, and the virgin's radiant eye,
Superiour to disease, to grief and time,
Shines with unbating lustre. Thus at length
Endow'd with all that Nature can bestow
The child of Fancy oft' in silence bends 375
O'er these mixt treasures of his pregnant breast
With conscious pride; from them he oft' resolves
To frame he knows not what excelling things,
And win he knows not what sublime reward
Of praise and wonder. By degrees the Mind 380
Feels her young nerves dilate, the plastick pow'rs
Labour for action, blind emotions heave
His bosom, and with loveliest frenzy caught
From earth to heav'n he rows his daring eye,
From heav'n to earth. Anon ten thousand shapes, 385
Like spectres trooping to the wizard's call,
Flit swift before him: from the womb of earth,
From ocean's bed, they come: th' eternal heav'ns
Disclose their splendours, and the dark abyss
Pours out her births unknown. With fixed gaze 390
He marks the rising phantoms, now compares
Their diff'rent forms, now blends them, now divides,
Enlarges and extenuates by turns;
Opposes, ranges in fantastick bands,

And infinitely varies : hither now, 395
 Now thither, fluctuates his inconstant aim,
 With endless choice perplex'd. At length his plan
 Begins to open, lucid order dawns,
 And as from Chaos old the jarring seeds
 Of Nature at the voice divine repair'd 400
 Each to its place, till rosy earth unveil'd
 Her fragrant bosom, and the joyful sun
 Sprung up the blue serene, by swift degrees
 Thus disentrangled his entire design
 Emerges. Colours mingle, features join, 405
 And lines converge; the fainter parts retire,
 The fairer eminent in light advance,
 And ev'ry image on its neighbour smiles.
 A while he stands, and with a father's joy
 Contemplates, then with Promethean art 410
 Into its proper vehicle he breathes
 The fair conception, which imbody'd thus
 And permanent becomes to eyes or ears
 An object ascertain'd; while thus inform'd
 The various organs of his mimick skill, 415
 The consonance of sounds, the featur'd rock,
 The shadowy picture and impassion'd verse,
 Beyond their proper pow'rs attract the soul
 By that expressive semblance, while in sight

[411. *Into its proper vehicle, &c.*] This relates to the different sorts of corporeal mediums by which the ideas of the artists are rendered palpable to the senses, as by sounds in music, by lines and shadows in painting, by diction in poetry, &c.

Of Nature's great original we scan 420
The lively child of Art, while line by line
And feature after feature we refer
To that sublime exemplar whence it stole
Those animating charms. Thus beauty's palm
Betwixt them wav'ring hangs, applauding love 425
Doubts where to chuse, and mortal man aspires
To tempt creative praise. As when a cloud
Of gath'ring hail with limpid crusts of ice
Enclos'd, and obvious to the beaming sun,
Collects his large effulgence, straight the heav'ns 430
With equal flames present on either hand
The radiant visage, Persia stands at gaze
Appall'd, and on the brink of Ganges doubts
The snowy vested seer, in Mithra's name,
To which the fragrance of the south shall burn, 435
To which his warbled orisons ascend.
Such various bliss the welltun'd heart enjoys
Favour'd of Heav'n, while plung'd in sordid cares
Th' unfeeling vulgar mocks the boon divine,
And harsh Austerity, from whose rebuke 440
Young Love and smiling Wonder shrink away,
Abash'd and chill of heart, with sager frowns
Condemns the fair enchantment. On my strain
Perhaps ev'n now some cold fastidious judge
Casts a disdainful eye, and calls my toil, 445
And calls the love and beauty which I sing,
The dream of Folly. Thou, grave Censor! say,

Is beauty then a dream, because the glooms
Of dulness hang too heavy on thy sense
To let her shine upon thee? So the man 450
Whose eye ne'er open'd on the light of heav'n
Might smile with scorn while raptur'd Vision tells
Of the gay colour'd radiance flushing bright
O'er all creation. From the wise be far
Such gross unhallow'd pride! Nor needs my song 455
Descend so low, but rather now unfold,
If human thought could reach or words unfold,
By what mysterious fabrick of the mind
'The deep-felt joys and harmony of sound
Result from airy motion, and from shape 460
The lovely phantoms of sublime and fair.
By what fine ties hath God connected things,
When present in the mind, which in themselves
Have no connexion? Sure the rising sun
O'er the cerulean convex of the sea 465
With equal brightness and with equal warmth
Might rowl his fiery orb, nor yet the soul
Thus feel her frame expanded, and her pow'rs
Exulting in the splendour she beholds,
Like a young conq'ror moving thro' the pomp 470
Of some triumphal day. When join'd at eve
Soft-murm'ring streams and gales of gentlest breath
Melodious Philomela's wakeful strain
Attempter, could not man's discerning ear
Thro' all its tones the sympathy pursue, 475

Nor yet this breath divine of nameless joy
Steal thro' his veins and fan th' awaken'd heart,
Mild as the breeze yet rapt'rous as the song?

But were not Nature still endow'd at large
With all which life requires tho' unadorn'd 480
With such enchantment? Wherefore then her form
So exquisitely fair? her breath perfum'd
With such ethereal sweetness? whence her voice
Inform'd at will to raise or to depress
Th' impassion'd soul? and whence the robes of light
Which thus invest her with more lovely pomp 486
Than Fancy can describe? Whence but from thee,
O Source Divine of everflowing love!
And thy unmeasur'd goodness? Not content
With ev'ry food of life to nourish man, 490
By kind illusions of the wond'ring sense
Thou mak'st all Nature beauty to his eye
Or musick to his ear: wellpleas'd he scans
The goodly prospect, and with inward smiles
Treads the gay verdure of the painted plain, 495
Beholds the azure canopy of heav'n,
And living lamps that over-arch his head
With more than regal splendour; bends his ears
To the full choir of water, air, and earth;
Nor heeds the pleasing error of his thought, 500
Nor doubts the painted green or azure arch,
Nor questions more the musick's mingling sounds
Than space or motion, or eternal time;

So sweet he feels their influence to attract
 The fixed soul, to brighten the dull glooms
 Of care, and make the destin'd road of life
 Delightful to his feet. So fables tell
 Th' advent'rous hero bound on hard exploits
 Beholds with glad surprise, by secret spells
 Of some kind sage the patron of his toils,
 A visionary paradise disclos'd
 Amid the dubious wild; with streams, and shades,
 And airy songs, th' enchanted landscape smiles,
 Cheers his long labours, and renews his frame.

What then is taste, but these internal pow'rs
 Active, and strong, and feelingly alive
 To each fine impulse? a discerning sense
 Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
 From things deform'd, or disarrang'd, or gross
 In species? This nor gems, nor stores of gold,
 Nor purple state, nor culture, can bestow,
 But God alone, when first his active hand
 Imprints the secret bias of the soul.
 He, mighty Parent! wise and just in all,
 Free as the vital breeze or light of heav'n,
 Reveals the charms of Nature. Ask the swain
 Who journeys homeward from a summer day's
 Long labour, why forgetful of his toils
 And due repose he loiters to behold
 The sunshine gleaming as thro' amber clouds
 O'er all the western sky? full soon, I ween,

His rude expression and untutor'd airs
 Beyond the pow'r of language will unfold
 The form of Beauty smiling at his heart,
 How lovely, how commanding! But tho' Heav'n's
 In ev'ry breast hath sown these early seeds
 Of love and admiration, yet in vain
 Without fair culture's kind parental aid,
 Without enliv'ning suns and genial show'rs,
 And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope
 The tender plant should rear its blooming head,
 Or yield the harvest promis'd in its spring
 Nor yet will ev'ry soil with equal stores
 Repay the tiller's labour, or attend
 His will obsequious, whether to produce
 The olive or the laurel. Diff'rent minds
 Incline to diff'rent objects; one pursues
 The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild;
 Another sighs for harmony, and grace,
 And gentlest beauty. Hence when lightning fires
 The arch of heav'n, and thunders rock the ground,
 When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
 And ocean groaning from his lowest bed
 Heaves his tempest'ous billows to the sky,
 Amid the mighty uproar while below
 The nations tremble, Shakespeare looks abroad
 From some high cliff superiour, and enjoys

* 547. ——— one pursues—The vast alone, &c] See the
 note to * 18. of this book.

The elemental war; but Waller longs
 All on the margin of some flow'ry stream,
 To spread his careless limbs amid the cool 560
 Of plantain shades, and to the list'ning deer
 The tale of slighted vows and love's disdain
 Resound soft-warbling all the livelong day:
 Consenting Zephyr sighs, the weeping rill
 Joins in his plaint melodious, mute the groves, 565
 And hill and dale with all their echoes mourn.
 Such and so various are the tastes of men!

Oh blest of Heav'n! whom not the languid songs
 Of Luxury the Siren, not the bribes
 Of sordid Wealth, nor all the gaudy spoils 570
 Of pageant Honour, can seduce to leave
 Those ever-blooming sweets which from the store
 Of Nature fair Imagination culls
 To charm th' enliven'd soul! What tho' not all
 Of mortal offspring can attain the heights 575
 Of envy'd life, tho' only few possess
 Patrician treasures or imperial state?

¶ 558. *Waller longs, &c.*]

"O! how I long my careless limbs to lay

"Under the plantain shade, and all the day

"With am'rous airs my fancy entertain," &c.

Waller. Battle of the Summer Islands, Canto I.

And again,

"While in the Park I sing the list'ning deer,

"Attend my passion and forget to fear," &c.

At Penshurst.

Yet Nature's care, to all her children just,
 With richer treasures and an ampler state
 Endows at large whatever happy man
 Will deign to use them. Mis the city's pomp,
 The rural honours his; whatever adorns
 The princely dome, the column and the arch,
 The breathing marbles and the sculptur'd gold,
 Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim,
 His tuneful breast enjoys. For him the spring
 Distils her dews, and from the silken gem
 Its lucid leaves unfolds; for him the hand
 Of Autumn tinges ev'ry fertile branch
 With blooming gold and blushes like the Morn. 590
 Each passing Hour sheds tribute from her wings,
 And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,
 And loves unfehl attract him. Not a breeze

V. 593. — [Not a breeze, &c.] That this account may not appear rather poetically extravagant than just in philosophy, it may be proper to produce the sentiment of one of the greatest, wisest, and best of men on this head; one so little to be suspected of partiality in the case, that he reckons it among those favours for which he was especially thankful to the gods, that they had not suffered him to make any great proficiency in the arts of eloquence and poetry, lest by that means he should have been diverted from pursuits of more importance to his high station. Speaking of the beauty of universal Nature, he observes that "there is a pleasing and graceful aspect in every object we perceive" when once we consider its connexion with that general order. He instances in many things which at first sight would be thought rather deformities; and then adds, "that a man who enjoys a sensibility of temper, with a just comprehension of the universal order—

Flies o'er the meadow; not a cloud imbibes
 The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain 595
 From all the tenants of the warbling shade
 Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
 Fresh pleasure unprov'd: nor thence partakes
 Fresh pleasure only, for th' attentive mind
 By this harmonious action on her pow'rs 600
 Becomes herself harmonious: wont so oft'
 In outward things to meditate the charm
 Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
 To find a kindred order, to exert
 Within herself this elegance of love, 605
 This fair inspir'd delight: her temper'd pow'rs
 Refine at length, and ev'ry passion wears
 A chaster, milder, more attractive, mien.
 But if to ampler prospects, if to gaze
 On Nature's form, where negligent of all 610
 These lesser graces she assumes the port
 Of that Eternal Majesty that weigh'd
 The world's foundations; if to these the mind
 Exalts her daring eye, then mightier far
 Will be the change and nobler. Would the forms 615
 Of servile custom cramp her gen'rous pow'rs?
 Would sordid policies, the barb'rous growth
 Of Ignorance and Rapine, bow her down

"will discern many amiable things, not credible to every
 mind, but to those alone who have entered into an honour-
 able familiarity with Nature and her works." *M. Ant.* iii. 2.

To tame pursuits, to indolence and fear?
Lo! she appeals to Nature, to the winds 620
And rowling waves, the sun's unwearied course,
The elements and seasons. All declare
For what th' Eternal Maker has ordain'd
The pow'rs of man: we feel within ourselves
His energy divine: he tells the heart 625
He meant, he made, us to behold and love
What he beholds and loves, the gen'ral orb
Of life and being; to be great like him,
Beneficent and active. Thus the men
Whom Nature's works can charm with God himself
Hold converse, grow familiar day by day 631
With his conceptions, act upon his plan,
And form to his the relish of their souls. 633

END OF BOOK THIRD.

K iij

THE
PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

The General Argument.

THE Pleasures of the Imagination proceed either from natural objects, as from a flourishing grove, a clear and murmuring fountain, a calm sea by moonlight, or from works of art, such as a noble edifice, a musical tune, a statue, a picture, a poem. In treating of these Pleasures we must begin with the former class, they being original to the other; and nothing more being necessary in order to explain them than a view of our natural inclination toward greatness and beauty, and of these appearances in the world around us to which that inclination is adapted. This is the subject of the first book of the following poem. But the Pleasures which we receive from the elegant arts, from musick, sculpture, painting, and poetry, are much more various and complicated. In them (besides greatness and beauty, or forms proper to the Imagination) we find interwoven frequent representations of truth, of virtue and vice, of circumstances proper to move us with laughter, or to excite in us pity, fear, and the other passions. These moral and intellectual objects are described in the second book, to which the third properly belongs as an episode, though too large to have been included in it. With the abovementioned causes of Pleasure, which are universal in the course of human life, and appertain to

our higher faculties, many others do generally concur, more limited in their operation, or of an inferiour origin; such are the novelty of objects, the association of ideas, affections of the bodily senses, influences of education, national habits, and the like. To illustrate these, and from the whole to determine the character of a perfect taste, is the argument of the fourth book.

Hitherto the Pleasures of the Imagination belong to the human species in general; but there are certain particular men whose Imagination is endowed with powers and susceptible of Pleasures which the generality of mankind never participate: these are the men of genius, destined by Nature to excel in one or other of the arts already mentioned. It is proposed therefore in the last place, to delineate that genius which in some degree appears common to them all, yet with a more peculiar consideration of poetry, inasmuch as poetry is the most extensive of those arts, the most philosophical, and the most useful.

THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BOOK I.

MDCCLVII.

The Argument.

THE subject proposed. Dedication. The ideas of the Supreme Being the exemplars of all things. The variety of constitution in the minds of men, with its final cause. The general character of a fine Imagination. All the immediate Pleasures of the human Imagination proceed either from greatness or beauty in external objects. The Pleasure from greatness, with its final cause. The natural connexion of beauty with truth * and good. The different orders of beauty in different objects. The infinite and allcomprehending form of beauty, which belongs to the Divine Mind. The partial and artificial forms of beauty which belong to inferior intellectual beings. The origin and general conduct of beauty in man. The subordination of local beauties to the beauty of the universe. Conclusion.

WITH what enchantment Nature's goodly scene
Attracts the sense of mortals; how the mind
For its own eye doth objects nobler still
Prepare; how men by various lessons learn
To judge of Beauty's praise; what raptures fill 5
The breast with Fancy's native arts endow'd,
And what true culture guides it to renown,
My Verse unfolds. Ye gods or godlike Pow'rs!
Ye Guardians of the sacred task! attend

* Truth is here taken not in a logical but in a mixed and popular sense, or for what has been called the truth of things, denoting as well their natural and regular condition as a proper estimate or judgment concerning them.

Propitious: hand in hand around your Bard; 10
Move in majestick measures, leading on
His doubtful step thro' many a solemn path; 10
Conscious of secrets which to human sight
Ye only can reveal. Be great in him,
And let your favour make him wise to speak 15
Of all your wondrous empire, with a voice
So temper'd to his theme that those who hear
May yield perpetual homage to yourselves;
Thou chief, O daughter of eternal Love!
Whate'er thy name, or Muse or Grace, ador'd
By Grecian prophets, to the sons of Heav'n
Known while with deep amazement thou dost there
The perfect counsels read, th' ideas old
Of thine Omniscient Father, known on earth
By the still horror and the blissful tear
With which thou seizest on the soul of man;
Thou chief, Poetick Spirit! from the banks
Of Avon, whence thy holy fingers cull
Fresh flow'rs and dew to sprinkle on the turf
Where Shakespeare lies, be present; and with thee
Let Fiction come, on her aerial wings
Wasting ten thousand colours, which in sport
By the light glances of her magick eye
She blends and shifts at will thro' countless forms,
Her wild creation. Goddess of the Lyre,
Whose awful tones control the moving sphere,
Wilt thou, eternal Harmony! descend

And join this happy train: for with thee comes,
The guide the guardian of their mystick rites,
Wife Order; and where Order deigns to come
Her sister Liberty will not be far.
Be present all ye Genii! who conduct
Of youthful bards the lonely wand'ring step
New to your springs and shades; who touch their ear
With finer sounds, and heighten to their eye
The pomp of Nature, and before them place
The fairest lofliest countenance of things.
Nor thou, my Dyson! to the lay refuse
Thy wonted partial audience: What tho' first
In years unseason'd, haply ere the sports
Of childhood yet were o'er, the advent'rous lay
With many splendid prospects, many charms,
Allur'd my heart, nor conscious whence they sprung,
Nor heedful of their end? yet serious Truth
Her empire o'er the calm sequester'd theme
Asserted soon, while Falshood's evil brood,
Vice and deceitful Pleasure, she at once
Excluded, and my fancy's careless toil
Drew to the better cause. Maturer aid
Thy friendship added, in the paths of life,
The busy paths, my unaccustom'd feet
Preserving; nor to truth's recess divine
Thro' this wide argument's unbeaten space
Withholding surer guidance, while by turns
We trac'd the sages old, or while the queen

Of Sciences, (whom manners and the mind
 Acknowledge) to my true companion's voice
 Not unattentive, o'er the wintry lamp
 Inclined her sceptre favouring. Now the Fates
 Have other tasks impos'd. To thee, my Friend!
 The ministry of freedom and the faith
 Of popular decrees in early youth
 Not vainly they committed. Me they sent
 To wait on pain, and silent arts to urge
 Inglorious, not ignoble, if my cares
 To such as languish on a grievous bed
 Ease and the sweet forgetfulness of ill
 Conciliate; nor delightful, if the Muse
 Her shades to visit and to taste her springs,
 If some distinguish'd hours the bounteous Muse
 Impart, and grant (what she and she alone
 Can grant to mortals) that my hand those wreaths
 Of fame and honest favour which the blest
 Wear in Elysium, and which never felt
 The breath of Envy or malignant tongues,
 That these my hand for thee and for myself
 May gather. Mean-while, O my faithful Friend!
 O early chosen, ever found the same,
 And trusted and belov'd! once more the verse
 Long destin'd, always obvious to thine ear,
 Attend indulgent: so in latest years,
 When Time thy head with honours shall have cloth'd
 Sacred to even Virtue, may thy mind

Amid the calm review of seasons past;
Fair offices of friendship, or kind peace
Or publick zeal, may then thy mind wellpleas'd
Recall these happy studies of our prime!
From Heav'n my strains begin, from Heav'n de-
The flame of genius to the chosen breast, [scends
And beauty, with poetick wonder join'd
And inspiration. Ere the rising sun
Shone o'er the deep, or 'mid the vault of night
The moon her silver lamp suspended, ere
The vales with springs were water'd, or with groves
Of oak or pine the ancient hills were crown'd,
Then the Great Spirit, whom his works adore,
Within his own deep essence view'd the forms,
The forms eternal, of created things,
The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
The mountains and the streams, the ample stores
Of earth, of heav'n, of Nature. From the first
On that full scene his love divine he fix'd,
His admiration, till in time complete
What he admir'd and lov'd his vital pow'r
Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
Of life informing each organick frame,
Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves,
Hence light and shade alternate; warmth and cold,
And bright autumnal skies and vernal show'rs,
And all the fair variety of things.
But not alike to ev'ry mortal eye.

Is this great scene unveil'd; for while the claims
Of social life to diff'rent labours urge
The active pow'rs of man, with wisest care
Hath Nature on the multitude of minds
Impress'd a various bias, and to each
Decreed its province in the common toil.
To some she taught the fabrick of the sphere,
The changeful moon, the circuit of the stars,
The golden zones of heav'n: to some she gave
To search the story of eternal thought,
Of space and time, of Fate's unbroken chain,
And will's quick movement: others by the hand
She led o'er vales and mountains, to explore
What healing virtue dwells in ev'ry vein
Of herbs or trees. But some to nobler hopes
Were destin'd; some within a finer mould
She wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame:
To these the Sire Omnipotent unfolds
In fuller aspects and with fairer lights
This picture of the world. Thro' ev'ry part
They trace the lofty sketches of his hand;
In earth or air, the meadow's flow'ry store,
The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin's mien,
Dress'd in attractive smiles, they see portray'd
(As far as mortal eyes the portrait scan)
Those lineaments of beauty which delight
The mind supreme: they also feel their force
Enamour'd; they partake th' eternal joy.

For as old Memnon's image, long renown'd 150
Thro' fabling Egypt, at the genial touch
Of morning from its inmost frame sent forth
Spontaneous music, so doth Nature's hand
To certain attributes which matter claims
Adapt the finer organs of the mind; 155
So the glad impulse of those kindred pow'rs
(Of form, of colour's cheerful pomp, of sound
Melodious, or of motion aptly sped)
Detains th' enliven'd sense, till soon the soul
Feels the deep concord, and assents thro' all 160
Her functions. Then the charm by Fate prepar'd
Diffuseth its enchantment; Fancy dreams,
Rapt into high discourse with prophets old,
And wand'ring thro' Elysium; Fancy dreams
Of sacred fountains, of o'ershadowing groves, 165
Whose walks with godlike harmony resound,
Fountains which Homer visits, happy groves
Where Milton dwells. The intellectual pow'r
On the mind's throne suspends his graver cares,
And smiles: the passions to divine repose 170
Persuaded yield, and love and joy alone
Are waking; love and joy, such as await
An angel's meditation. O! attend,
Whoe'er thou art whom these delights can touch,
Whom Nature's aspect, Nature's simple garb, 175
Can thus command: O! listen to my Song,
And I will guide thee to her blissful walks,

And teach thy solitude her voice to hear,
And point her gracious features to thy view.

Know then whate'er of the world's ancient store,
Whate'er of mimic art's reflected scenes, 181
With love and admiration thus inspire
Attentive Fancy, her delighted sons
In two illustrious orders comprehend
Selftaught! From him whose rustick toil the lark 185
Cheers warbling, to the bard whose daring thoughts
Range the full orb of being, still the form
Which Fancy worships or sublime or fair
Her votaries proclaim. I see them dawn!
I see the radiant visions where they rise, 190
More lovely than when Lucifer displays
His glitt'ring forehead thro' the gates of morn
To lead the train of Phœbus and the Spring!

Say, why was man so eminently rais'd
Amid the vast creation? why empower'd 195
Thro' life and death to dart his watchful eye,
With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame,
But that th' Omnipotent might send him forth,
In sight of angels and immortal minds,
As on an ample theatre, to join 200
In contest with his equals, who shall best
The task achieve, the course of noble toils,
By wisdom and by mercy preordain'd?
Might send him forth the sovran good to learn,
To chase each meaner purpose from his breast, 205

And thro' the mists of passion and of sense,
 And thro' the pelting storms of chance and pain,
 To hold straight on, with constant heart and eye
 Still fix'd upon his everlasting palm,
 Th' approving smile of Heav'n? Else wherefore burns
 In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope,
 That seeks from day to day sublimer ends,
 Happy tho' restless? why departs the soul
 Wide from the track and journey of her times
 To grasp the good she knows not? in the field
 Of things which may be, in the spacious field
 Of science, potent arts, or dreadful arms,
 To raise up scenes in which her own desires
 Contented may repose, when things which are
 Pall on her temper like a twice told tale;
 Her temper, still demanding to be free,
 Spurning the rude control of wilful Might,
 Proud of her dangers brav'd, her griefs endur'd,
 Her strength severely prov'd? To these high aims
 Which reason and affection prompt in man
 Not adverse nor unapt hath Nature fram'd
 His bold Imagination; for amid
 The various forms which this full world presents
 Like rivals to his choice, what human breast
 E'er doubts before the transient and minute
 To prize the vast, the stable, the sublime?
 Who that from heights aerial sends his eye
 Around a wild horizon, and surveys

Indus or Ganges rolling his broad wave
Thro' mountains, plains, thro' spacious cities old,
And regions dark with woods, will turn away 236
To mark the path of some penurious rill
Which murmur'eth at his feet? Where does the Soul
Consent her soaring fancy to restrain,
Which bears her up as on an eagle's wings 240
Destin'd for highest heav'n? or which of Fate's
Tremend'ous barriers shall confine her flight
To any humbler quarry? The rich earth
Cannot detain her, nor the ambient air
With all its changes. For a while with joy 245
She hovers o'er the sun, and views the small
Attendant orbs beneath his sacred beam
Emerging from the deep, like cluster'd isles,
Whose rocky shores to the glad sailor's eye
Reflect the gleams of morning; for a while 250
With pride she sees his firm paternal sway
Bend the reluctant planets to move each
Round its perpetual year; but soon she quits
That prospect; meditating loftier views
She darts advent'rous up the long career 255
Of comets, thro' the constellations holds
Her course, and now looks back on all the stars,
Whose blended flames as with a milky stream
Part the blue region. Empyrean tracks,
Where happy souls beyond this concave heav'n 260
Abide, she then explores, whence purer light

For countless ages travels thro' th' abyss;
Nor hath in sight of mortals yet arriv'd:
Upon the wide creation's utmost shore
At length she stands, and the dread space beyond
Contemplates, half recoiling; nathless down
The gloomy void astonish'd yet unquell'd
She plungeth; down th' unfathomable gulf
Where God alone hath being; there her hopes
Rest at the fated goal: for from the birth
Of humankind the Sovran Maker said
That not in humble nor in brief delight,
Nor in the fleeting echoes of Renown,
Pow'rs purple robes, nor Pleasure's flow'ry lap,
The soul should find contentment, but from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Thro' Nature's op'ning walks enlarge her aim
Till ev'ry bound at length should disappear
And infinite perfection fill the scene.

But lo! where Beauty dress'd in gentler pomp
With comely steps advancing claims the verse
Her charms inspire. O Beauty! source of praise,
Of honour, ev'n to mute and lifeless things;
O thou that kindlest in each human heart
Love and the wish of poets, when their tongue
Would teach to other bosoms what so charms
Their own! O child of Nature and the Soul
In happiest hour brought forth, the doubtful garb
Of words, of earthly language, all too mean,

Too lowly, I account in which to clothe 290
Thy form divine! for thee the mind alone
Beholds, nor half thy brightness can reveal
Thro' those dim organs whose corporeal touch
O'ershadoweth thy pure essence, Yet my Muse!
If Fortune call thee to the task, wait thou 295
Thy favourable seasons; then while fear
And doubt are absent thro' wide Nature's bounds
Expatriate with glad step, and chuse at will
Whate'er bright spoils the florid earth contains,
Whate'er the waters or the liquid air, 300
To manifest unblemish'd Beauty's praise,
And o'er the breasts of mortals to extend
Her gracious empire. Wilt thou to the isles
Atlantick, to the rich Hesperian clime,
Fly in the train of Autumn, and look on 305
And learn from him, while as he roves around
Where'er his fingers touch the fruitful grove
The branches bloom with gold, where'er his foot
Imprints the soil the ripening clusters swell,
Turning aside their foliage, and come forth 310
In purple lights, till ev'ry-hillock glows
As with the blushes of an ev'ning sky?
Or wilt thou that Thessalian landscape trace
Where slow Peneus his clear glassy tide
Draws smooth along, between the winding cliffs 315
Of Ossa and the pathless woods unscorn'd
That wave o'er huge Olympus? Down the stream

Look how the mountains with their double range
Embrace the vale of Tempe, from each side
Ascending steep to heav'n a rocky mound 320
Cover'd with ivy and the laurel boughs
That crown'd young Phœbus for the Python slain.
Fair Tempe! on whose primrose banks the morn
Awoke most fragrant, and the noon repos'd
In pomp of lights and shadows most sublime; 325
Whose lawns, whose glades, ere human footsteps yet
Had trac'd an entrance, were the hallow'd haunt
Of sylvan pow'rs immortal, where they sat
Oft' in the Golden Age, the Nymphs and Fauns,
Beneath some arbour branching o'er the flood, 330
And leaning round hung on th' instructive lips
Of hoary Pan, or o'er some open dale
Danc'd in light measures to his sev'nfold pipe,
While Zephyr's wanton hand along their path
Flung show'rs of painted blossoms, fertile dews, 335
And one perpetual spring. But if our task
More lofty rites demand, with all good vows
Then let us hasten to the rural haunt
Where young Melissa dwells; nor thou refuse
The voice which calls thee from thy lov'd retreat,
But hither, gentle Maid! thy footsteps turn; 341
Here to thy own unquestionable theme
O fair! O graceful! bend thy polish'd brow,
Assenting, and the gladness of thy eyes
Impart to me, like morning's wish'd light 345

Seen thro' the vernal air. By yonder stream,
 Where beech and elm along the bord'ring mead
 Send forth wild melody from ev'ry bough
 Together let us wander, where the hills
 Cover'd with flocks to the lowing vale
 Reply, where tidings of content and peace
 Each echo brings. Lo how the western sun
 O'er fields and floods, o'er ev'ry living soul,
 Diffuseth glad repose! There while I speak
 Of Beauty's honours thou, Melissa! thou
 Shalt hearken, not unconscious, while I tell
 How first from heav'n she came, how after all
 The works of life, the elemental scenes,
 The hours, the seasons, she had oft' explor'd,
 At length her fav'rite mansion and her throne
 She fix'd in woman's form; what pleasing ties
 To virtue bind her, what effectual aid
 They lend each other's pow'r, and how divine
 Their union, should some unambitious maid
 To all th' enchantment of th' Italian queen
 Add sanctity and wisdom. While my tongue
 Prolongs the tale, Melissa! thou may'st feign
 To wonder whence my rapture is inspir'd;
 But soon the smile which dawns upon thy lip
 Shall tell it, and the tend'rer bloom o'er all
 That soft cheek springing to the marble neck,
 Which bends aside in vain, revealing more
 What it would thus keep silent, and in vain

The sense of praise dissembling. Then my song
Great Nature's winning arts, which thus inform 375
With joy and love the rugged breast of man,
Should sound in numbers worthy of such a theme;
While all whose souls have ever felt the force
Of those enchanting passions to my lyre
Should throng attentive, and receive once more 380
Their influence, unobscur'd by any cloud
Of vulgar care, and purer than the hand
Of Fortune can bestow : nor to confirm
Their sway should awful Contemplation scorn
To join his dictates to the genuine strain 385
Of Pleasure's tongue, nor yet should Pleasure's ear
Be much averse. Ye chiefly, gentle band
Of Youths and Virgins! who thro' many a wish
And many a fond pursuit, as in some scene
Of magick bright and fleeting are allur'd 390
By various beauty, if the pleasing toil
Can yield a moment's respite, hither turn
Your favourable ear, and trust my words.
I do not mean on blest'd Religion's seat
Presenting Superstition's gloomy form 395
To dash your soothing hopes; I do not mean
To bid the jealous Thund'rer fire the heav'ns,
Or shapes infernal rend the groaning earth,
And scare you from your joys. My cheerful song
With happier omens calls you to the field, 400
Pleas'd with your gen'rous ardour in the chase,

And warm like you. Then tell me, (for ye know)
Doth Beauty ever deign to dwell where use
And aptitude are strangers? is her praise
Confess'd in aught whose most peculiar ends
Are lame and fruitless? or did Nature mean
This pleasing call the herald of a lie,
To hide the shame of discord and disease,
And win each fond admirer into snares,
Foil'd, baffled? No: with better providence
The gen'ral Mother, conscious how infirm
Her offspring tread the paths of good and ill,
Thus to the choice of credulous desire
Doth objects the completest of their tribe
Distinguish and commend. Yon' flow'ry bank
Cloth'd in the soft magnificence of spring
Will not the flocks approve it? will they ask
The reedy fen for pasture? That clear rill
Which trickleth murm'ring from the mossy rock,
Yields it less wholesome bev'rage to the worn
And thirsty trav'ler than the standing pool
With muddy weeds o'ergrown? Yon' ragged vine,
Whose lean and sullen clusters mourn the rage
Of Eurys, will the winepress or the bowl
Report of her as of the swelling grape
Which glitters thro' the tendrils like a gem
When first it meets the sun? Or what are all
The various charms to life and sense adjoin'd
Are they not pledges of a state entire,

Where native order reigns, with ev'ry part new 1430
In health and ev'ry function well perform'd?

Thus then at first was Beauty sent from heav'n,
The lovely ministrers of Truth and Good
In this dark world; for Truth and Good are one,
And Beauty dwells in them and they in her 1435
With like participation. Wherefore then,
O Sons of Earth! would ye dissolve the tie?
Oh! wherefore with a rash and greedy aim
Seek ye to rove thro' ev'ry flatt'ring scene
Which Beauty seems to deck, nor once inquire 1440
Where is the suffrage of eternal Truth,
Or where the seal of undeceitful good,
To save your search from folly? Wanting these
Lo! Beauty withers in your void embrace,
And with the glitt'ring of an idiot's toy 1445
Did fancy mock your vows. Nor yet let hope,
That kindest inmate of the youthful breast,
Be hence appall'd; be turn'd to coward sloth,
Sitting in silence with dejected eyes,
Incurious, and with folded hands & farless 1450
Let scorn of wild fantastick folly's dreams,
Or hatred of the bigot's savage pride;
Persuade you e'er that Beauty, or the love
Which waits on Beauty, may not brook to hear
The sacred lore of undeceitful good 1455
And truth eternal. From the vulgar crowd
Tho' Superstition, tyranness abhorr'd!

The reverence due to this majestic pair
With threats and execration still demands;
Tho' the tame wretch who asks of her the way 460
To their celestial dwelling she constrains
To quench or set at nought the lamp of God
Within his frame; thro' many a cheerless wild
Tho' forth she leads him credulous and dark,
And aw'd with dubious notion; tho' at length 465
Haply she plunge him into cloister'd cells
And mansions unrelenting as the grave,
But void of quiet, there to watch the hours
Of midnight, there amid the screaming owl's
Dire song with spectres or with guilty shades 470
To talk of pangs and everlasting woe;
Yet be not ye dismay'd; a gentler star
Presides o'er your adventure. From the bow'r
Where Wisdom sat with her Athenian sons
Could but my happy hand intwine a wreath 475
Of Plato's olive with the Mantuan bay,
Then (for what need of cruel fear to you,
To you whom godlike love can well command?)
Then should my pow'ful voice at once dispel
Those monkish horrors; should in words divine 480
Relate how favour'd minds like you inspir'd,
And taught their inspiration to conduct
By ruling Heav'n's decree, thro' various walks,
And prospects various, but delightful all,
Move onward; while now myrtle groves appear 485

Now arms and radiant trophies, now the rods
 Of empire with the curule throne, or now
 The domes of Contemplation and the Muse.
 Led by that hope sublime whose cloudless eye
 Thro' the fair toils and ornaments of earth 490
 Discerns the nobler life reserv'd for heav'n;
 Favour'd alike they worship round the shrine
 Where Truth conspicuous with her sister-twins,
 The undivided partners of her sway,
 With Good and Beauty reigns. O! let not us 495
 By Pleasure's lying blandishments detain'd,
 Or crouching to the frowns of bigot Rage,
 O! let not us one moment pause to join
 That chosen band: and if the gracious Pow'r
 Who first awaken'd my untutor'd song 500
 Will to my invocation grant anew
 The tuneful spirit, then thro' all our paths
 Ne'er shall the sound of this devoted lyre
 Be wanting, whether on the rosy mead
 When summer smiles to warn the melting heart 505
 Of Luxury's allurements, whether firm
 Against the torrent and the stubborn hill
 To urge free Virtue's steps, and to her side
 Summon that strong divinity of soul
 Which conquers Chance and Fate, or on the height,
 The goal assign'd her, haply to proclaim 511
 Her triumph, on her brow to place the crown
 Of uncorrupted praise, thro' future worlds

To follow her interminated way,
And bleſs Heav'n's image in the heart of man. 515

Such is the worth of Beauty, ſuch her pow'r,
So blameleſs, ſo rever'd. It now remains
In juſt gradation thro' the various ranks
Of being to contemplate how her gifts
Riſe in due meaſure, watchful to attend. 520

The ſteps of riſing Nature. Laſt and leaſt
In colours mingling with a random blaze
Doth Beauty dwell: then higher in the forms
Of ſimpleſt eaſieſt meaſure, in the bounds
Of circle, cube, or ſphere: the third aſcent. 525

To ſymmetry adds colour: thus the pearl
Shines in the concave of its purple bed,
And painted ſhells along ſome winding ſhore
Catch with indented folds the glancing ſun.

Next as we riſe appear the blooming tribes 530
Which clothe the fragrant earth, which draw from
Their own nutrition, which are born and die,
Yet in their ſeed immortal: ſuch the flow'rs
With which young Maia pays the village maids.

That hail her natal morn, and ſuch the groves 535
Which blithe Pomona rears on Vaga's bank
To feed the bowl of Ariconian ſwains
Who quaff beneath her branches. Nobler ſtill

Is Beauty's name where to the full conſent
Of members and of features, to the pride 540
Of colour and the vital change of growth,

Life's holy flame with piercing sense is giv'n,
 While active motion speaks the temper'd soul;
 So moves the bird of Jann, so the fleet
 With rival swiftness beats the dusty plain,
 And faithful dogs with eager aies of joy
 Salute their fellows. What sublimer pomp
 Adorns the seat where Virtue dwells on earth
 And Truth's eternal daylight shines around;
 What palm belongs to man's imperial front,
 And woman, pow'rful with becoming smiles,
 Chief of terrestrial natures! need we now
 Strive to inculcate? Thus hath Beauty there
 Her most conspicuous praise to Matter lent
 Where most conspicuous thro' that shadowy veil
 Breaks forth the bright expression of a mind
 By steps directing our entraptur'd search
 To him the first of minds, the chief, the sole,
 From whom thro' this wide-complicated world
 Did all her various lineaments begin;
 To whom alone, consenting and entire,
 At once their mutual influence all display.
 He, God most high, (bear witness Earth and Heav'n!)
 The living fountain in himself contains
 Of beauteous and sublime. With him inthron'd
 Ere days or years trod their ethereal way,
 In his supreme intelligence inthron'd,
 The queen of Love holds her unclouded state,
 Urania. Thee, O Father! this extent

Of matter, thee the sluggish earth and track 570
Of seas, the heav'ns and heav'ly splendours, feel
Pervading, quick'ning, moving. From the depth
Of thy great essence forth didst thou conduct
Eternal Form, and there where Chaos reign'd
Gav'st her dominion to erect her seat 575
And sanctify the mansion. All her works
Wellpleas'd thou didst behold; the gloomy fires
Of storm or earthquake, and the purest light
Of summer; soft Campania's newborn rose,
And the slow weed which pines on Russian hills, 580
Comely alike to thy full vision stand;
To thy surrounding vision, which unites
All essences and pow'rs of the great world
In one sole order, fair alike they stand,
As features well consenting, and alike 585
Requir'd by Nature ere she could attain
Her just resemblance to the perfect shape
Of universal Beauty, which with thee
Dwelt from the first. Thou also, Ancient Mind!
Whom love and free beneficence await 590
In all thy doings, to inferiour minds
Thy offspring, and to man thy youngest son,
Refusing no convenient gift nor good,
Their eyes didst open in this earth, yon' heav'n,
Those starry worlds, the countenance divine 595
Of Beauty to behold: but not to them
Didst thou her awful magnitude reveal

Such as before thine own unbounded sight,
She stands, (for never shall created soul
Conceive that object) nor to all their kinds
The same in shape or features didst thou frame
Her image. Measuring well their diff'rent spheres
Of sense and action, thy paternal hand
Hath for each rate prepar'd a diff'rent test
Of Beauty, own'd and reverenc'd as their guide
Most apt, most faithful. Thence inform'd they scan
The objects that surround them, and select,
Since the great whole disclaims their scanty view,
Each for himself selects, peculiar parts
Of Nature, what the standard fix'd by Heaven
Within his breast approves; acquiring thus
A partial beauty which becomes his lot,
A beauty which his eye may comprehend,
His hand may copy; leaving, O Supreme!
O thou whom none hath utter'd! leaving all
To thee that infinite consummate form
Which the great pow'rs, the gods around thy throne
And nearest to thy counsels, know with thee
For ever to have been, but who she is
Or what her likeness know not. Man surveys
A narrower scene, where by the mix'd effect
Of things corporeal on his passive mind
He judgeth what is fair. Corporeal things
The mind of man impel with various pow'rs,
And various features to his eye disclose.

The pow'rs which move his sense with instant joy,
The features which attract his heart to love,
He marks, combines, reposes. Other pow'rs
And features of the selfsame thing (unless
The beauteous form, the creature of his mind,
Request their close alliance) he o'erlooks
Forgotten, or with self-beguiling zeal
Where'er his passions mingle in the work
Half alters, half disowns. The tribes of men
Thus from their diff'rent functions, and the shapes
Familiar to their eye, with art obtain
Unconscious of their purpose, yet with art
Obtain the Beauty fitting man to love,
Whose proud desires from Nature's homely toil
Oft' turn away fastidious, asking still
His mind's high aid to purify the form
From matter's gross communion, to secure
For ever from the meddling hand of Change
Or rude Decay her features, and to add
Whatever ornaments may suit her mien
Where'er he finds them scatter'd thro' the paths
Of Nature or of Fortune; then he seats
Th' accomplish'd image deep within his breast,
Reviews it, and accounts it good and fair.
Thus the one Beauty of the world entire,
The universal Venus, far beyond
The keenest effort of created eyes
And their most wide horizon dwells in thron'd

In ancient silence : at her footstool stands
An altar burning with eternal fire 655
Unfully'd, unconsum'd. Here ev'ry hour,
Here ev'ry moment, in their turns arrive
Her offspring, an innumerable band
Of sisters, comely all, but diff'ring far
In age, in stature, and expressive mien, 660
More than bright Helen from her newborn babe.
To this maternal shrine in turns they come,
Each with her sacred lamp, that from the source
Of living flame which here immortal flows
Their portions of its lustre they may draw 665
For days, or months, or years, for ages some,
As their great parent's discipline requires;
Then to their sev'ral mansions they depart,
In stars, in planets, thro' the unknown shores
Of yon' ethereal ocean. Who can tell 670
Ev'n on the surface of this rowling earth
How many make abode ? The fields, the groves,
The winding rivers, and the azure main,
Are render'd solemn by their frequent feet,
Their rites sublime. There each her destin'd home
Informs with that pure radiance from the skies 676
Brought down, and shines thro'out her little sphere
Exulting, Straight as travellers by night
Turn toward a distant flame, so some fit eye
Among the various tenants of the scene 680
Discerns the heav'n-born phantom seated there,

And owns her charms: hence the wide universe
 Thro' all the seasons of revolving worlds
 Bears witness with its people, gods and men,
 To Beauty's blissful power, and with the voice
 Of grateful admiration still resounds;
 That voice to which is Beauty's frame divine
 As is the conning of the master's hand
 To the sweet accent of the well-tun'd lyre
 Geniis of ancient Greece! whose faithful steps
 Have led us to these awful solitudes
 Of Nature and of Science; Nurse sever'd
 Of gen'rous counsels and heroic deeds!
 O let some portion of thy matchless praise
 Dwell in my breast, and teach me to adorn
 This unattempted theme! Nor be my thoughts
 Presumptuous counted if amid the calm
 Which Hesper sheds along the vernal heav'n
 If I from vulgar Superstition's walk
 Impatient steal, and from th' unseemly rites
 Of splendid Adulation, to attend
 With hymns thy presence in the sylvan shade,
 By their malignant footsteps unprofan'd
 Come, O renowned Pow'r! thy glowing mien
 Such, and so elevated all thy form,
 As when the great Barbarick lord, again
 And yet again diminish'd, hid his face
 Among the herd of satraps and of kings,
 And at the lightning of thy lifted spear

Crouch'd like a slave. Bring all thy martial spoils,
Thy palms, thy laurels, thy triumphal songs, 711
Thy smiling band of arts, thy godlike fires
Of civil wisdom, thy unconquer'd youth,
After some glorious day rejoicing round
Their new-erected trophy. Guide my feet 715
Thro' fair Lyceum's walk, the olive shades
Of Academus, and the sacred vale
Haunted by steps divine, where once beneath
That ever-living platane's ample boughs
Ilissus, by Socratick sounds detain'd, 720
On his neglected urn attentive lay,
While Boreas ling'ring on the neighb'ring steep
With beauteous Orithyia his loyetales
In silent awe suspended: there let me
With blameless hand from thy unenvious fields 725
Transplant some living blossoms to adorn
My native clime, while far beyond the meed
Of Fancy's toil aspiring I unlock
The springs of ancient wisdom, while I add
(What cannot be disjoin'd from Beauty's praise) 730
Thy name and native dress, thy works belov'd
And honour'd, while to my compatriot youth
I point the great example of thy sons,
And tune to Attick themes the British lyre. 734

END OF BOOK FIRST.

THE
PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BOOK II.

The Argument.

INTRODUCTION to this more difficult part of the subject. Of truth and its three classes, matter of fact, experimental or scientific truth; (contradistinguished from opinion) and universal truth; which last is either metaphysical or geometrical, either purely intellectual or perfectly abstracted. On the power of discerning truth depends that of acting with the view of an end, a circumstance essential to virtue. Of virtue, considered in the Divine Mind as a perpetual and universal beneficence. Of human virtue, considered as a system of particular sentiments and actions, suitable to the design of Providence and the condition of man, to whom it constitutes the chief good and the first beauty. Of vice and its origin. Of ridicule; its general nature and final cause. Of the passions, particularly of those which relate to evil natural or moral, and which are generally accounted painful, though not always unattended with Pleasure.

Thus far of Beauty and the pleasing forms
Which man's untutor'd fancy from the scenes
Imperfect of this ever-changing world
Creates and views enamour'd. Now my song
Severer themes demand, mysterious truth,
And virtue, sovran good; the spells, the trains,
The progeny, of Error; the dread sway
Of Passion, and whatever hidden stores
From her own lofty deeds and from herself
The mind acquires. Severer argument,
Not less attractive nor deserving less
A constant ear: for what are all the forms
Educ'd by fancy from corporeal things,
Greatness, or pomp, or symmetry of parts?

Not tending to the heart soon feeble grows, 15
As the blunt arrow 'gainst the knotty trunk,
Their impulse on the sense, while the pall'd eye
Expects in vain its tribute, asks in vain
Where are the ornaments it once admir'd?
Not so the moral species, nor the pow'rs 20
Of passion and of thought. Th' ambitious mind
With objects boundless as her own desires
Can there converse: by these unfading forms
Touch'd and awaken'd still, with eager act
She bends each nerve, and meditates wellpleas'd 25
Her gifts, her godlike fortune. Such the scenes
Now op'ning round us: may the destin'd Verse
Maintain its equal renour, tho' in tracks
Obscure and ard'ous! may the Source of Light,
Allpresent, allsufficient, guide our steps 30
Thro' ev'ry maze! and whom in childish years
From the loud throng, the beaten paths of wealth
And pow'r, thou didst apart send forth to speak
In tuneful words concerning highest things,
Him still do thou, O Father! at those hours 35
Of pensive freedom, when the human soul
Shuts out the rumour of the world, him still
Touch thou with secret lessons; call thou back
Each erring thought, and let the yielding strains
From his full bosom like a welcome rill 40
Spontaneous from its healthy fountain flow!
But from what name, what favourable sign,
What heav'nly auspice, rather shall I date

My perilous excursion than from truth,
 That nearest inmate of the human soul,
 Estrang'd from whom the countenance divine
 Of man disfigur'd and dishonour'd, sinks
 Among inferiour things? for to the brutes
 Perception and the transient boons of sense
 Hath Fate imparted, but to man alone
 Of sublunary beings was it given
 Each fleeting impulse on the sensual pow'rs
 At leisure to review, with equal eye
 To scan the passion of the stricken nerve,
 Or the vague object striking, to conduct
 From sense, the portal turbulent and loud,
 Into the mind's wide palace one by one
 The frequent, pressing, fluctuating, forms,
 And question and compare them. Thus he learns
 Their birth and fortunes, how ally'd they haunt
 The avenues of sense, what laws direct
 Their union, and what various discords rise
 Or fix'd or casual; which when his clear thought
 Retains, and when his faithful words express,
 That living image of th' external scene,
 As in a polish'd mirror held to view,
 Is truth; where'er it varies from the shape
 And hue of its exemplar, in that part
 Dim error lurks. Moreover, from without
 When oft the same society of forms
 In the same order have approach'd his mind,

He deigns no more their steps with curious heed
 To trace; no more their features or their garb;
 He now examines, but of them and their
 Condition, as with some diviner's tongue, 73
 Affirms what Heav'n in ev'ry distant place
 Thro' ev'ry future season will decree:
 This too is truth: where'er his prudent lips
 Wait till experience diligent and slow
 Has authoris'd their sentence, this is truth; 80
 A second higher kind; the parent this
 Of Science, or the lofty pow'r herself,
 Science herself, on whom the wants and cares
 Of social life depend, the substitute
 Of God's own wisdom in this toilsome world; 85
 The providence of man: Yet oft' in vain
 To earn her aid with fix'd and anxious eye
 He looks on Nature's and on Fortune's course,
 Too much in vain: his duller visual ray
 The stillness and the persevering acts
 Of Nature oft' elude, and Fortune oft' 90
 With step fantastick from her wonted walk
 Turns into mazes dim: his sight is spoil'd,
 And the crude sentence of his falt'ring tongue
 Is but Opinion's verdict half believ'd, 95
 And prone to change. Here thou who feelst thine ear
 Congenial to my lyre's profounder tone
 Pause and be watchful. Hitherto the stores
 Which feed thy mind and exercise her pow'rs
 Partake the relish of their native soil,

Their parent earth: but know a nobler dow'r
Her fire at birth decreed her, purer gifts
From his own treasure, forms which never design'd
In eyes or ears to dwell within the sense
Of earthly organs, but sublime were plac'd
In his essential reason, leading there
That vast ideal host which all his works
Thro' endless ages never will reveal.
Thus then endow'd the feeble creature man,
The slave of hunger and the prey of Death,
Even now, even here, in earth's dim prison bound,
The language of intelligence divine
Attains, repeating oft' concerning one
And many, past and present, parts and whole,
Those sovran dictates which in farthest heav'n,
Where no orb rowls, Eternity's fix'd ear
Hears from coeval truth, when Chance nor Change,
Nature's loud progeny, nor Nature's self,
Dares intermeddle or approach her throne.
Ere long o'er this corporeal world he learns
T' extend her sway, while calling from the deep,
From earth and air, their multitudes untold
Of figures and of motions round his walk,
For each wide family some single birth
He sets in view, th' impartial type of all
Its brethren, suff'ring it to claim beyond
Their common heritage no private gift,
No proper fortune. Then whate'er his eye
In this discerns his bold unerring tongue

Pronounceth of the kindred without bound,
Without condition: Such the rise of forms
Sequester'd far from sense, and ev'ry spot
Peculiar in the realms of space or time;
Such is the throne which man for Truth amid
The paths of mutability hath built
Secure, unshaken, still, and whence he views
In matter's mould'ring structures the pure forms
Of triangle or circle, cube or cone,
Impassive all, whose attributes nor Force
Nor Fate can alter: there he first conceives
True being and an intellectual world,
The same this hour and ever: thence he deems
Of his own lot above the painted shapes
That fleeting move o'er this terrestrial scene;
Looks up, beyond the adamantine gates
Of death-expatiates, as his birthright claims
Inheritance in all the works of God,
Prepares for endless time his plan of life,
And counts the universe itself his home.
Whence also but from truth, the light of minds,
Is human fortune gladden'd with the rays
Of virtue? with the moral colours thrown
On ev'ry walk of this our social scene,
Adorning for the eye of gods and men
The passions, actions, habitudes of life,
And rend'ring earth like heav'n, a sacred place
Where Love and Praise may take delight to dwell?
Let none with heedless tongue from Truth disjoin

The reign of Virtue. Ere the day-spring flow'd
Like sisters link'd in Concord's golden chain 160
They stood before the great Eternal Mind,
Their common parent, and by him were both
Sent forth among his creatures hand in hand,
Inseparably join'd; nor e'er did Truth
Find an apt ear to listen to her lore 165
Which knew not Virtue's voice; nor save where
Majestick words are heard and understood [Truth's
Doth Virtue deign t' inhabit. Go, inquire
Of Nature, not among Tartarean rocks,
Whither the hungry vulture with its prey 170
Returns, not where the lion's fallen roar
At noon resounds along the lonely banks
Of ancient Tigris, but her gentler scenes,
The dovecote and the shepherd's fold at morn
Consult; or by the meadow's fragrant hedge, 175
In springtime when the woodlands first are green,
Attend the linnet singing to his mate
Couch'd o'er their tender young. To this fond care
Thou dost not Virtue's honourable name
Attribute; wherefore, save that not one gleam 180
Of truth did e'er discover to themselves
Their little hearts, or teach them by th' effects
Of that parental love the love itself
'To judge, and measure its officious deeds?
But man, whose eyelids Truth has fill'd with day, 185
Discerns how skilfully to bounteous ends

His wife affections move, with free accord
Adopts their guidance, yields himself secure
To Nature's prudent impulse, and converts
Instinct to duty and to sacred law: 190
Hence right and fit on earth, while thus to man
Th' Almighty Legislator hath explain'd
The springs of action fix'd within his breast,
Hath giv'n him pow'r to slacken or restrain
Their effort, and hath shewn him how they join 195
Their partial movements with the master-wheel
Of the great world, and serve that sacred end
Which he th' Unerring Reason keeps in view.

For (if a mortal tongue may speak of him
And his dread ways) ev'n as his boundless eye 200
Connecting ev'ry form and ev'ry change
Beholds the perfect beauty, so his will
Thro' ev'ry hour producing good to all
The family of creatures is itself
The perfect virtue. Let the grateful swain 205
Remember this as oft' with joy and praise
He looks upon the falling dews which clothe
His lawns with verdure, and the tender seed
Nourish within his furrows; when between
Dead seas and burning skies, where long unmov'd 210
The bark had languish'd, now a rustling gale
Lifts o'er the fickle waves the dancing prow,
Let the glad pilot bursting out in thanks
Remember this, lest blind o'erweening pride
Pollute their off'rings, lest their selfish heart 215

Say to the heav'nly Ruler "At our call
 "Relents thy pow'r; by us thy arm is mov'd."
 Fools! who of God as of each other deem,
 Who his invariable acts deduce
 From sudden counsels transient as their own,
 Nor farther of his bounty than th' event,
 Which haply meets their loud and eager pray'r,
 Acknowledge, nor beyond the drop minute,
 Which haply they have tasted, heed the source
 That flows for all, the fountain of his love,
 Which from the summit where he sits inthron'd
 Pours health and joy, unfailing streams, thro' out
 The spacious region flourishing in view,
 The goodly work of his eternal day,
 His own fair universe, on which alone
 His counsels fix, and whence alone his will
 Assumes her strong direction. Such is now
 His sovran purpose, such it was before
 All multitude of years: for his right arm
 Was never idle; his bestowing love
 Knew no beginning; was not as a change
 Of mood that woke at last and started up
 After a deep and solitary sloth
 Of boundless ages: no; he now is good;
 He ever was. The sect of hoary Time
 Thro' their eternal course have travell'd o'er
 No speechless lifeless desert, but thro' scenes
 Cheerful with bounty still, among a pomp
 Of worlds for gladness round the Maker's throne

Loud shouting, or in many dialects 243
Of hope and filial trust imploring thence
The fortunes of their people, where so fix'd
Were all the dates of being, so dispos'd
To ev'ry living soul of ev'ry kind
The field of motion and the hour of rest, 250
That each the gen'ral happiness might serve,
And by the discipline of laws divine
Convinc'd of folly or chastiz'd from guilt
Each might at length be happy. What remains
Shall be like what is pass'd, but fairer still, 255
And still increasing in the godlike gifts
Of life and truth. The same paternal hand
From the mute shellfish gasping on the shore
To men, to angels, to celestial minds,
Will ever lead the generations on 260
Thro' higher scenes of being, while supply'd
From day to day by his enliv'ning breath
Inferiour orders in succession rise
To fill the void below. As flame ascends,
As vapours to the earth in show'rs return, 265
As the pois'd ocean tow'rd th' attracting moon
Swells, and the ever list'ning planets charm'd
By the sun's call their onward pace incline,
So all things which have life aspire to God,
Exhausted fount of intellectual day, 270
Centre of souls! Nor doth the mast'ring voice
Of Nature cease within to prompt aright
Their steps, nor is the care of Heav'n withheld

From sending to the toil external aid,
That in their stations all may persevere,
To climb th' ascent of being, and approach
For ever nearer to the life divine.

But this eternal fabrick was not rais'd
For man's inspection. Tho' to some he giv'n
To catch a transient visionary glimpse
Of that majestick scene which boundless pow'r
Prepares for perfect goodness, yet in vain
Would human life her faculties expand
T' imbosom such an object, nor could e'er
Virtue or praise have touch'd the hearts of men.

Had not the Sovran Guide thro' ev'ry stage
Of this their various journey pointed out
New hopes, new toils, which to their humble sphere
Of sight and strength might such importance hold
As doth the wide creation to his own:

Hence all the little charities of life,
With all their duties, hence that fav'rite palm
Of human will when duty is suffic'd,
And still the lib'ral soul in ampler deeds
Would manifest herself, that sacred sign

Of her rever'd affinity to him
Whose bounties are his own, to whom none said
"Create the wisest, fullest, fairest, world,

"And make its offspring happy;" who intent
Some likeness of himself among his works
To view, hath pour'd into the human breast
A ray of knowledge and of love which guides

Earth's feeble race to act their Maker's part,
 Self-judging, self-oblig'd, while from before
 That godlike function the gigantick pow'r
 Necessity, tho' wont to curb the force
 Of Chaos and the savage elements,
 Retires abash'd, as from a scene too high
 For her brute tyranny, and with her bears
 Her scorn'd followers Terrour and base Awe,
 Who blinds herself, and that ill-suited pair,
 Obedience link'd with Hatred: Then the soul
 Arises in her strength, and looking round
 Her busy sphere, whatever work she views,
 Whatever counsel, bearing any trace
 Of her Creator's likeness, whether apt
 To aid her fellows or preserve herself
 In her superiour functions unimpair'd,
 Whither she turns exulting; that she claims
 As her peculiar good; on this thro' all
 The fickle seasons of the day she looks
 With rev'rence still; to that as to a fence
 Against affliction and the darts of pain
 Her drooping hopes repair; and once oppos'd
 To that all other pleasure, other wealth,
 Vile as the dross upon the molten gold
 Appears, and loathsome as the briny sea
 To him who languishes with thirst and sighs
 For some known fountain pure: For what can strive
 With virtue? which of Nature's regions vast
 Can in so many forms produce to sight

Such pow'rful beauty, beauty which the eye
 Of Hatred cannot look upon secure,
 Which Envy's self contemplates, and is turn'd
 Ere long to tenderness, to infant smiles,
 Or tears of humblest love. Is aught so fair 335
 In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
 The summer's noontide groves, the purple eve
 At harvest-home, or in the frosty moon
 Glitt'ring on some smooth sea, is aught so fair 340
 As virtuous friendship? as the honour'd roof
 Whither from highest heav'n immortal Love
 His torch ethereal and his golden bow
 Propitious brings, and there a temple holds
 To whose unspotted service gladly vow'd 345
 The social band of parent, brother, child,
 With smiles and sweet discourse and gentle deeds
 Adore his pow'r? What gift of richest clime
 E'er drew such eager eyes, or prompted such
 Deep wishes, as the zeal that snatcheth back 350
 From Slander's pois'nous tooth a foe's renown,
 Or crosseth danger in his lion walk
 A rival's life to rescue? as the young
 Athenian warrior sitting down in bonds
 That his great father's body might not want 355
 A peaceful, humble, tomb? the Roman wife
 Teaching her lord how harmless was the wound
 Of death, how impotent the tyrant's rage,
 Who nothing more could threaten to afflict
 Their faithful love? Or is there in th' abyss 360

Is there among the adamantinè spheres
 Wheeling unshaken thro' the boundless void
 Aught that with half such majesty can fill
 The human bosom as when Brutus rose
 Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate
 Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm
 Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
 When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
 On Tully's name, and shook the crimson sword
 Of justice in his rapt astonish'd eye,
 And bad the father of his country Hail
 For lo the tyrant prostrate on the dust,
 And Rome again is free! Thus thro' the paths
 Of human life, in various pomp array'd,
 Walks the wise daughter of the Judge of Heav'n,
 Fair Virtue! from her Father's throne supreme
 Sent down to utter laws such as on earth
 Most apt he knew, most pow'rful to promote
 The weal of all his works, the gracious end
 Of his dread empire. And tho' haply man's
 Obscure sight so far beyond himself
 And the brief labours of his little home
 Extends not, yet by the bright presence won
 Of this divine instructress, to her sway
 Pleas'd he assents, nor heeds the distant goal
 To which her voice conducts him. Thus hath God,
 Still looking tow'rd his own high purpose, fix'd
 The virtues of his creatures, thus he rules
 The parent's fondness and the patriot's zeal

Thus the warm sense of honour and of shame, 395

The vows of gratitude, the faith of love,

And all the comely intercourse of praise,

The joy of human life, the earthly heav'n,

How far unlike them must the lot of guilt

Be found! or what terrestrial woe can match 395

The self-convicted bosom which hath wrought

The bane of others, or enslav'd itself

With shackles vile? Not poison nor sharp fire,

Nor the worst pangs that ever monkish hate

Suggested, or despotick Rage impos'd, 400

Were at that season an unwill'd exchange,

When the soul loathes herself, when flying thence

To crowds on ev'ry brow she sees portray'd

Fell demons, Hate or Scorn, which drive her back

To solitude, her Judge's voice divine 405

To hear in secret, haply sounding thro'

The troubled dreams of midnight, and still, still

Demanding for his violated laws

Fit recompense, or charging her own tongue

To speak th' award of justice on herself; 410

For well she knows what faithful hints within

Were whisper'd to beware the lying forms

Which turn'd her footsteps from the safer way,

What cautions to suspect their painted dress,

And look with steady eyelid on their smiles, 415

Their frowns, their tears. In vain the dazzling hues

Of Fancy and Opinion's eager voice

Volume I

Too much prevail'd; for mortals tread the path
 In which Opinion says they follow good
 Or fly from evil; and Opinion gives
 Report of good or evil as the scene
 Was drawn by Fancy, pleasing or deform'd:
 Thus her report can never there be true
 Where Fancy cheats the intellectual eye
 With glaring colours and distorted lines.
 Is there a man to whom the name of death
 Brings terror's ghastly pageants conjur'd up
 Before him, deathbed groans and dismal vows,
 And the frail soul plung'd headlong from the brink
 Of life and daylight down the gloomy air
 An unknown depth to gulfs of tort'ring fire
 Unvisited by mercy? then what hand
 Can snatch this dreamer from the fatal toils
 Which Fancy and Opinion thus conspire
 To twine around his heart? or who shall hush
 Their clamour when they tell him that to die
 To risk those horrors, is a direr curse
 Than basest life can bring? Tho' Love with prayers
 Most tender, with Affliction's sacred tears,
 Beseech his aid, tho' Gratitude and Faith
 Condemn each step which loiters, yet let none
 Make answer for him that if any frown
 Of danger thwart his path he will not stay
 Content, and be a wretch to be secure.
 Here vice begins then at the gate of life,
 Ere the young multitude to diverse roads

Part, like fond pilgrims on a journey unknown,
 Sits Fancy, deep enchantress, and to each
 With kind maternal looks presents her bowl,
 A potent bev'rage. Heedless they comply,
 Till the whole soul from that mysterious draught
 Is ting'd, and ev'ry transient thought imbibes
 Of gladness or disgust, desire or fear,
 One homebred colour, which not all the lights
 Of science e'er shall change, nor all the storms
 Of adverse fortune wash away, nor yet
 The robe of purest virtue quite conceal.
 Thence on they pass, where meeting frequent shapes
 Of good and evil, cunning phantoms apt
 To fire or freeze the breast, with them they join
 In dang'rous parley, list'ning oft', and oft'
 Gazing with reckless passion, while its garb
 The spectre heightens, and its pompous tale
 Repeats with some new circumstance to suit
 That early tincture of the hearer's soul.
 And should the guardian Reason but for one
 Short moment yield to this illusive scene
 His ear and eye, th' intoxicating charm
 Involves him, till no longer he discerns,
 Or only guides to err. Then revel forth
 A furious band that spurn him from the throne,
 And all is uproar: hence Ambition climbs
 With sliding feet and hands impure to grasp
 Those solemn toys which glitter in his view
 On Fortune's rugged steep; hence pale Revenge

Unsheaths her murd'rous dagger; Rapine hence,
 And envious Lust, by venal Fraud upborne,
 Surmount the rev'rend barrier of the laws,
 Which kept them from their prey: hence all the crimes
 That e'er defil'd the earth, and all the plagues 480
 That follow them for vengeance, in the guise
 Of honour, safety, pleasure, ease, or pomp,
 Stole first into the fond believing mind.
 Yet not by Fancy's witchcraft on the brain
 Are always the tumult'ous passions driv'n 483
 To guilty deeds, nor Reason bound in chains
 That Vice alone may lord it: oft' adorn'd
 With motley pageants Folly mounts his throne,
 And plays her idiot anticks like a queen.
 A thousand garbs she wears, a thousand ways 490
 She whirls her giddy empire. — Lo! thus far
 With bold adventure to the Mantuan lyre
 I sing for contemplation link'd with love
 A pensive theme: now haply should my song
 Unbend that serious count'nance, and learn 493
 Thalia's tripping gait, her shrill-ton'd voice,
 Her wiles familiar, whether scorn she darts
 In wanton ambush from her lip or eye,
 Or whether with a sad disguise of care
 O'ermantling her gay brow she acts in sport 500
 The deeds of Folly, and from all sides round
 Calls forth impetuous Laughter's gay rebuke,
 Her province. But thro' ev'ry comick scene
 To lead my Muse with her light pencil arm'd,

Thro' ev'ry swift occasion which the hand 305
 Of Laughter points at when the mirthful sting
 Distends her lab'ring sides and chokes her tongue, T
 Were endless as to sound each grating note
 With which the rooks and chatt'ring daws, and grave
 Unwieldy inmates of the village pond, 310
 The changing seasons of the sky proclaim
 Sun, cloud, or show'r. Suffice it to have said
 Where'r the pow'r of Ridicule displays
 Her quaint-ey'd visage some incongr'ous form,
 Some stubborn dissonance of things combin'd, 315
 Strikes on her quick perception, whether Pomp,
 Or Praise, or Beauty, be dragg'd in and shown
 Where sordid fashions, where ignoble deeds,
 Where foul Deformity, is wont to dwell,
 Or whether these with shrewd and wayward spite 320
 Invade resplendent Pomp's imperious mien,
 The charms of Beauty or the boast of Praise.
 Ask we for what fair end th' Almighty Sire
 In mortal bosoms stirs this gay contempt,
 These grateful pangs of laughter, from disgust 325
 Educing pleasure? Wherefore but to aid
 The tardy steps of Reason, and at once
 By this prompt impulse urge us to depress
 Wild Folly's aims; for tho' the sober light
 Of Truth slow dawning on the watchful mind 330
 At length unfolds thro' many a subtle tie
 How these uncouth disorders end at last

In publick evil, yet benignant Heav'n,
 Conscious how dim the dawn of truth appears
 To thousands, conscious what a scanty pause 535
 From labour and from care the wider lot
 Of humble life affords for studious thought
 To scan the maze of Nature, therefore stung'd
 These glaring scenes with characters of scorn
 As broad, as obvious, to the passing clown 540
 As to the letter'd sage's curious eye.

But other evils o'er the steps of man
 Thro' all his walks impend, against whose might
 The slender darts of laughter nought avail;
 A trivial warfare. Some like cruel guards 545
 On Nature's ever-moving throne attend,
 With mischief arm'd for him whoc'er shall thwart
 The path of her inexorable wheels,
 While she pursues the work that must be done
 Thro' ocean, earth, and air: hence frequent forms
 Of woe, the merchant with his wealthy bark 551
 Bury'd by dashing waves, the traveller
 Pierc'd by the pointed lightning in his haste,
 And the poor husbandman with folded arms
 Surveying his lost labours and a heap 555
 Of blasted chaff, the product of the field,
 Whence he expected bread. But worse than these
 I deem, far worse, that other race of ills
 Which humankind rear up among themselves,
 That horrid offspring which misgovern'd Will 560
 Bears to fantastick Errour; Vices, Crimes,

Furies that curse the earth, and make the blows,
The heaviest blows, of Nature's innocent hand
Seem sport; which are indeed but as the care
Of a wise parent, who solicits good 565
To all her house, tho' haply at the price
Of tears, and sorrow wailing, and reproach,
From some unthinking child, whom not the less
Its mother destines to be happy still.

These sources then of pain, this double lot 570
Of evil in th' inheritance of man,
Requir'd for his protection no slight force,
No careless watch, and therefore was his breast
Fenc'd round with passions quick to be alarm'd,
Or stubborn to oppose; with fear more swift 575
Than beacons catching flame from hill to hill
Where armies land, with anger uncontroll'd
As the young lion bounding on his prey;
With sorrow that locks up the struggling heart,
And shame that overcasts the drooping eye 580
As with a cloud of lightning. These the part
Perform of eager monitors, and good
The soul more sharply than with points of steel
Her enemies to shun or to resist:
And as those passions that converse with good 585
Are good themselves, as hope, and love, and joy,
Among the fairest and the sweetest boons
Of life we rightly count, so these which guard
Against invading evil still excite
Some pain, some tumult; these within the mind 590

Too oft' admitted or too long retain'd
Shock their frail seat, and by their uncurb'd rage
To savages more fell than Libya breeds
Transform themselves, till human thought becomes
A gloomy ruin, haunt of shapes unblest'd, 595
Of self-tormenting fiends, Horror, Despair,
Hatred, and wicked Envy, foes to all
The works of Nature and the gifts of Heav'n.

But when thro' blameless paths to righteous ends
Those keener passions urge th' awaken'd soul, 600
I would not as ungracious violence
Their sway describe, nor from their free career
The fellowship of Pleasure quite exclude:
For what can render to the self-approv'd
Their temper void of comfort tho' in pain? 605
Who knows not with what majesty divine
The forms of Truth and Justice to the mind
Appear, ennobling oft' the sharpest wo
With triumph and rejoicing? Who that bears
A human bosom hath not often felt 610
How dear are all those ties which bind our race
In gentleness together, and how sweet
Their force, let Fortune's wayward hand the while
Be kind or cruel? Ask the faithful youth
Why the cold turn of her whom long he lov'd 615
So often fills his arms, so often draws
His lonely footsteps silent and unseen
To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
Oh! he will tell thee that the wealth of worlds

Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego
Those sacred hours when, stealing from the noise
Of care and envy, sweet remembrance loaths
With virtue's kindest looks his aching breast,
And turns his tears to rapture. Ask the crowd
Which flies impatient from the village walk
To climb the neighbouring cliffs when far below
The savage winds have hurl'd upon the coast
Some helpless bark, while holy Pity melts
The gen'ral eye, or Terror's icy hand
Smites their distorted limbs and horrent hair,
While ev'ry mother closer to her breast
Catcheth her child, and pointing where the waves
Foam thro' the shatter'd vessel, shrieks aloud
As one poor wretch who spreads his piteous arms
For succour swallow'd by the roaring surge,
As now another dash'd against the rock
Drops lifeless down: O! deemest thou indeed
No pleasing influence here by Nature giv'n
To mutual terror and Compassion's tears?
No tender charm mysterious which attracts
O'er all that edge of pain the social pow'rs
To this their proper action and their end?
Ask thy own heart when at the midnight hour
Slow thro' that pensive gloom thy pausing eye,
Led by the glimm'ring taper, moves around
The rev'rend volumes of the dead, the songs
Of Grecian bards, and records writ by Fame
For Grecian heroes, where the Sovran Pow'r

Of heav'n and earth surveys th' immortal page,
 Ev'n as a father meditating all
 The praises of his son, and bids the rest
 Of mankind there the fairest model learn
 Of their own nature, and the noblest deeds
 Which yet the world hath seen: if then thy soul
 Join in the lot of those diviner men,
 Say, when the prospect darkens on thy view,
 When sunk by many a wound heroick states
 Mourn in the dust, and tremble at the frown
 Of hard Ambition; when the gen'rous band
 Of youths who fought for freedom and their fires
 Lie side by side in death; when brutal Force
 Usurps the throne of Justice, turns the pomp
 Of guardian pow'r, the majesty of rule,
 The sword, the laurel, and the purple robe,
 To poor dishonest pageants, to adorn
 A robber's walk, and glitter in the eyes
 Of such as bow the knee; when beauteous works,
 Rewards of virtue, sculptur'd forms, which deck'd
 With more than human grace the warriour's arch
 Or patriot's tomb now victims to appease
 Tyrannick Envy strew the common path
 With awful ruins; when the Muses' haunt,
 The marble Porch where Wisdom wont to talk
 With Socrates or Tully, hears no more
 Save the hoarse jargon of contentious monks,
 Or female Superstition's midnight pray'r
 When ruthless Havock from the hand of Time

Tears the destroying ſiſhe, with ſuper ſtroke
 To mow the monuments of glory down,
 Till Deſolation o'er the graſs-grown ſtreet 680
 Expands her raven wings, and from the gate
 Where ſenates once the weal of nations plann'd
 Hiſſeth the gliding ſnake thro' heary weeds
 That clasp the mould'ring column: thus when all
 The widely mournful ſcene is fix'd within 685
 Thy throbbing boſom, when the patriot's tear
 Starts from thine eye, and thy extended arm
 In fancy hurls the thunderbolt of Jove
 To fire the impious wreath on Philip's brow,
 Or daſh Octavius from the trophy'd ear, 690
 Say, doth thy ſecret ſoul repine, to taſte
 The big diſtreſs? or wouldſt thou then exchange
 Thoſe heart-ennobling ſorrows for the ſoft
 Of him who ſits amid the gaudy herd
 Of ſilent flatterers bending to his nod, 695
 And o'er them like a giant caſts his eye,
 And ſays within himſelf, "I am a king."
 "And wherefore ſhould the clam'rous voice of Wo
 "Intrude upon mine ear?" The dregs corrupt
 Of barb'rous ages, that Circean draughts
 Of ſervitude and folly, have not yet, 700
 Bleſſ'd be th' Eternal Ruler of the world!
 Yet have not ſo diſhonour'd, ſo deform'd
 The native judgment of the human ſoul,
 Nor ſo effac'd the image of her Sire

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

161

BOOK III.

MDCCLXX.

WHAT tongue then may explain the various fate
 Which reigns o'er earth? or who to mortal eyes
 Illustrate this perplexing labyrinth
 Of joy and woe thro' which the feet of man
 Are doom'd to wander? That Eternal Mind,
 From passions, wants, and envy, far estrang'd;
 Who built the spacious universe, and deck'd
 Each part so richly with what'er pertains
 To life, to health, to pleasure, why had he
 The viper Evil creeping in pollution
 The goodly scent, and with insidious rage,
 While the poor inmate looks around and smiles,
 Dart her fell sting with poison to his soul?
 Hard is the question, and from ancient days
 Hath still oppress'd with care the sage's thought,
 Hath drawn forth accents from the poet's lyre
 Too sad, too deeply plaintive; nor did e'er
 Those chiefs of humankind from whom the light
 Of heav'nly truth first gleam'd on barbarous lands
 Forget this dreadful secret when they told
 What wondrous things had to their favour'd eyes
 And ears on cloudy mountain been reveal'd,
 Or in deep cave by nymph or pow'r divine,
 Portentous oft and wild: yet one I know,

Could I the speech of lawgivers assume,
 One old and splendid tale I would record
 With which the Muse of Solon in sweet strains
 Adorn'd this theme profound, and render'd all
 Its darkness, all its terrors, bright as noon,
 Or gentle as the golden star of eve.
 Who knows not Solon? last and wisest far
 Of those whom Greece triumphant in the height
 Of glory styl'd her Fathers? him whose voice
 Thro' Athens hush'd the storm of civil wrath,
 Taught envious Want and cruel Wealth to join
 In friendship, and with sweet compulsion tam'd
 Minerva's eager people to his laws,
 Which their own goddess in his breast inspir'd?

'Twas now the time when his heroic talk
 Seem'd but perform'd in vain, when sooth'd by years
 Of flatt'ring service the fond multitude
 Hung with their sudden counsels on the breath
 Of great Pisistratus, that chief renown'd
 Whom Hermes and th' Idalian queen had train'd
 Ev'n from his birth to every pow'rful art
 Of pleasing and persuading, from whose lips
 Flow'd eloquence which like the vows of love
 Could steal away suspicion from the hearts
 Of all who listen'd. Thus from day to day
 He won the gen'ral suff'rage, and beheld
 Each rival overshadow'd and depress'd
 Beneath his ampler state, yet oft complain'd

As one less kindly treated who had hop'd
 To merit favour, but submits perforce
 To find another's services prefer'd,
 Nor yet relaxeth aught of faith or zeal.
 Then tales were scatter'd of his envious foes,
 Of snares that watch'd his fame, of daggers aim'd
 Against his life. At last with trembling limbs,
 His hair diffus'd and wild, his garments loose,
 And stain'd with blood from self-inflicted wounds,
 He burst into the publick place, as there
 There only, were his refuge, and declar'd
 In broken words, with sighs of deep regret,
 The mortal danger he had scarce repell'd.
 Fir'd with his tragick tale th' indignant crowd
 To guard his steps forthwith a menial band
 Array'd beneath his eye for deeds of war
 Decree: O still too lib'ral of their trust
 And oft' betray'd by over-grateful love
 The gen'rous people! Now behold him sent'd
 By mercenary weapons, like a king
 Forth issuing from the city gate at eve
 To seek his rural mansion, and with pomp
 Crowding the publick road. The swain stops short,
 And sighs, th' officious townsmen stand at gaze,
 And shrinking give the fullen pageant room.
 Yet not the less obsequious was his brow,
 Nor less profuse of courteous words his tongue,
 Of gracious gifts his hand, the while by stealth,
 Like a small torrent fed with ev'ning show'rs,

His train increas'd; till at that fatal time,
 Just as the publick eye with doubt and shamen
 Startled began to question what it saw,
 Swift as the sound of earthquakes rush'd a voice
 Thro' Athens that Pisistratus had fill'd
 The rocky citadel with hostile arms,
 Had barr'd the steep ascent, and sat within
 Amid his hirelings meditating death
 To all whose stubborn necks his yoke refus'd,
 Where then was Solon? After ten long years
 Of absence full of haste from foreign shores
 The sage, the lawgiver, had now arriv'd;
 Arriv'd, alas! to see that Athens, that
 Fair temple rais'd by him, and sacred call'd
 To Liberty and Concord, now profan'd
 By savage hate, or sunk into a den
 Of slaves who crouch beneath the master's scourge,
 And deprecate his wrath and court his chains.
 Yet did not the wise patriot's grief impede
 His virt'ous will, nor was his heart inclin'd
 One moment with such womanlike distress
 To view the transient storms of civil war
 As thence to yield his country and her hopes
 To all-devouring bondage. His bright helm,
 Ev'n while the traitor's impious act is told,
 He buckles on his hoary head, he girds
 With mail his stooping breast, the shield, the spear,
 He snatcheth, and with swift indignant strides

'Th' assembled people seeks, proclaims aloud 110
 It was no time for counsel, in their spears
 Lay all their prudence now; the tyrant yet
 Was not so firmly seated on his throne
 But that one shock of their united force
 Would dash him from the summit of his pride: 115
 Headlong and grov'ling in the dust. What else
 Can reassert the lost Athenian name,
 So cheaply to the laughter of the world
 Betray'd, by guile beneath an infant's faith
 So mock'd and scorn'd? Away then; Freedom now
 And Safety dwell not but with fame in arms; 121
 Myself will shew you where their mansion lies,
 And thro' the walks of danger or of death
 Conduct you to them. While he spake thro' all
 Their crowded ranks his quick sagacious eye 123
 He darted, where no cheerful voice was heard
 Of social daring, no stretch'd arm was seen
 Haft'ning their common task, but pale mistrust
 Wrinkled each brow: they shook their heads and down
 Their slack hands hung: cold sighs and whisper'd
 doubts 130
 From breath to breath stole round. The sage mean-time
 Look'd speechless on, while his big bosom heav'd
 Struggling with shame and sorrow, till at last
 A tear broke forth; and "O immortal Shades! 134
 "O Thestus!" he exclaim'd, "O Codrus! where,
 "Where are ye now? behold for what ye toil'd
 "Thro' life! behold for whom ye chose to die!"

No more he added, but with lonely steps
 Weary and slow, his silver beard depress'd,
 And his stern eyes bent heedless on the ground, 140
 Back to his silent dwelling he repair'd;
 There o'er the gate his armour, as a man
 Whom from the service of the war his chief
 Dismisseth after no inglorious toil,
 He fix'd in gen'ral view: one wishful look 145
 He sent unconscious tow'rd the publick place
 At parting, then beneath his quiet roof
 Without a word, without a sigh, retir'd

Scarce had the morrow's sun his golden rays
 From sweet Hymettus darted o'er the fances 150
 Of Cecrops to the Salaminian shores
 When lo! on Solon's threshold met the feet
 Of four Athenians, by the same sad care
 Conducted all, than whom the state beheld
 None nobler. First came Megacles, the son 155
 Of great Alcmeon, whom the Lydian king,
 The mild unhappy Cræsus, in his days
 Of glory had with costly gifts adorn'd,
 Fair vessels, splendid garments, tinctur'd webs,
 And heaps of treasur'd gold beyond the lot 160
 Of many sov'rans, thus requiting well
 That hospitable favour which erewhile
 Alcmeon to his messengers had shewn,
 Whom he with off' rings worthy of the god
 Sent from his throne in Sardis to reverence 165

Apollo's Delphick shrine. With Megacles
 Approach'd his son, whom Agarista bore,
 The virtuous child of Clisthenes, whose hand
 Of Grecian sceptres the most ancient far
 In Sicyon sway'd; but greater fame he drew
 From arms controll'd by justice, from the love
 Of the wise Muses, and the unenvy'd wreath
 Which gl'ia Olympia gave; for thither once
 His warlike steeds the hero led, and there
 Contended thro' the tumult of the course
 With skilful wheels. Then victor at the goal
 Amid th' applauses of assembled Greece
 High on his car he stood, and wav'd his arm
 Silence ensu'd, when straight the herald's voice
 Was heard inviting ev'ry Grecian youth,
 Whom Clisthenes content might call his son,
 To visit ere twice thirty days were pass'd
 The towers of Sicyon. There the chief decreed
 Within the circuit of the following year
 To join at Hymen's altar hand in hand
 With his fair daughter him among the guests
 Whom worthiest he should deem. Forthwith from all
 The bounds of Greece th' ambitious wobers came;
 From rich Hesperia, from th' Illyrian shore,
 Where Epidamnus over Adria's forge
 Looks on the setting sun, from those brave tribes
 Chaonian or Molossian whom the race
 Of great Achilles governs, glorying still
 In Troy o'erthrown, from rough Ætolia, nurse

Of men who first among the Greeks threw off 195
 The yoke of kings, to commerce and to arms
 Devoted, from Thessalia's fertile meads,
 Where flows Peneus near the lofty walls
 Of Cranon old, from strong Eretria, queen
 Of all Euboean cities, who sublime 200
 On the steep margin of Euripus views
 Across the tide the Marathonian plain,
 Not yet the haunt of glory; Athens too,
 Minerva's care, among her graceful sons
 Found equal lovers for the princely maid; 205
 Nor was proud Argos wanting, nor the domes
 Of sacred Elis, nor th' Arcadian groves
 That overshadow Alpheus, echoing oft
 Some shepherd's song. But thro' th' illustrious band
 Was none who might with Megacles compare 210
 In all the honours of unblemish'd youth.
 His was the beauteous bride; and now their son,
 Young Clisthenes, betimes at Solon's gate
 Stood anxious, leaning forward on the arm
 Of his great sire, with earnest eyes that ask'd 215
 When the slow hinge would turn, with restless feet;
 And cheeks now pale, now glowing; for his heart
 Throbb'd, full of bursting passions, anger, grief,
 With scorn imbitter'd; by the gen'rous boy
 Scarce understood, but which, like noble seeds, 220
 Are destin'd for his country and himself
 In riper years to bring forth fruits divine
 Of liberty and glory. Next appear'd

Two brave companions, whom one mother bore
 To diff'rent lords, but whom the better ties
 Of firm esteem and friendship render'd more
 Than brothers; first Miltiades, who drew
 From godlike *Æacus* his ancient line,
 That *Æacus* whose unimpeach'd renown
 For sanctity and justice won the lyre
 Of elder bards to celebrate him thron'd
 In Hades o'er the dead, where his decrees
 The guilty soul within the burning gates
 Of Tartarus compel, or send the good
 T' inhabit with eternal health and peace
 The vallies of Elysium. From a stem
 So sacred ne'er could worthier scion spring
 Than this Miltiades, whose aid ere long
 The chiefs of Thrace, already on their ways
 Sent by th' inspir'd foreknowing maid who sits
 Upon the Delphick tripod, shall implore
 To wield their sceptre, and the rural wealth
 Of fruitful Chersonesus to protect
 With arms and laws: but nothing careful now
 Save for his injur'd country, here he stands
 In deep solicitude with Cimon join'd,
 Unconscious both what widely diff'rent lots
 Await them, taught by Nature as they are
 To know one common good, one common ill:
 For Cimon not his valour, not his birth,
 Deriv'd from Codrus, not a thousand gifts
 Dealt round him with a wise benignant hand,

No, not th' Olympick olive, by himself
 From his own brow transferr'd to sooth the mind
 Of this Pisistratus, can long preserve
 From the fell envy of the tyrant's sons
 And their assassin dagger. But if death
 Obscure upon his gentle sleep attend,
 Yet Fate an ample recompense prepares
 In his victorious son, that other great
 Multiades who o'er the very throne
 Of glory shall with Time's assiduous hand
 In adamantin characters engrave
 The name of Athens, and by Freedom arm'd
 'Gainst the gigantick pride of Asia's king
 Shall all th' achievements of the heroes old
 Surmount, of Hercules, of all who fail'd
 From Theffaly with Jason, all who fought
 For empire or for fame at Thebes or Troy.
 Such were the patriots who within the porch
 Of Solon had assembled: but the gate
 Now opens, and across the ample floor
 Straight they proceed into an open space
 Bright with the beams of morn, a verdant spot,
 Where stands a rural altar pil'd with fods
 Cut from the grassy turf, and girt with wreaths
 Of branching palm: Here Solon's self they found
 Clad in a robe of purple pure, and deck'd
 With leaves of olive on his rev'rend brow.
 He bow'd before the altar, and o'er cakes
 Of barley from two earthen vessels pour'd

Of honey and of milk a plenteous stream,
 Calling mean-time the Muses to accept
 His simple off'ring, by no victim ting'd
 With blood, nor sulli'd by destroying fire,
 But such as for himself Apollo claims
 In his own Delos, where his fav'rite haunt
 Is thence the altar of the Pious nam'd.
 Unseen the guests drew near, and silent view'd
 That worship, till the hero priest his eye
 Turn'd tow'rd a seat on which prepar'd there lay
 A branch of laurel; then his friends confess'd
 Before him stood. Backward his step he drew,
 And loth that care or tumult should approach
 Those early rites divine; but soon their looks
 So anxious, and their hands held forth with such
 Desponding gesture, bring him on perforce
 To speak to their affliction. "Are ye come,"
 He cry'd, "to mourn with me this common shame?
 "Or ask ye some new effort which may break
 "Our fetters? Know then of the publick cause
 "Not for yon' traitor's cunning or his might
 "Do I despair; nor could I wish from Jove
 "Aught dearer than at this late hour of life
 "As once by laws so now by strenuous arms
 "From impious violation to assert
 "The rights our fathers left us. But, alas!
 "What arms? or who shall wield them? Ye beheld
 "Th' Athenian people. Many bitter days
 "Must pass, and many wounds from cruel Pride

" Be felt, ere yet their partial hearts find room
 " For just resentment, or their hands endure
 " To smite this tyrant brood, so near to all
 " Their hopes, so oft' admir'd, so long belov'd.
 " That time will come however. Be it yours
 " To watch its fair approach, and urge it on
 " With honest prudence: me it ill beseems
 " Again to supplicate th' unwilling crowd
 " To rescue from a vile deceiver's hold
 " That envy'd pow'r which once with eager zeal
 " They offer'd to myself; nor can I plunge
 " In counsels deep and various, nor prepare
 " For distant wars, thus falt'ring as I tread
 " On life's last verge, ere long to join the shades
 " Of Minos and Lycurgus. But behold
 " What care employs me now. My vows I pay
 " To the sweet Muses, teachers of my youth,
 " And solace of my age. If right I deem
 " Of the still voice that whispers at my heart
 " Th' immortal Sisters have not quite withdrawn
 " Their old harmonious influence. Let your tongues
 " With sacred silence favour what I speak,
 " And haply shall my faithful lips be taught
 " To unfold celestial counsels, which may arm
 " As with impenetrable steel your breasts
 " For the long strife before you, and repel
 " The darts of adverse Fate. He said, and snatch'd
 " The laurel bough, and sat in silence down,
 " Fix'd, wrapp'd in solemn musing, full before

The sun, who now from all his radiant orb, 340
 Drove the grey clouds, and pour'd his genial light
 Upon the breast of Solon. Solon rais'd him
 Aloft the leafy rod, and thus began:
 "Ye beauteous offspring of Olympian Jove
 "And Memory divine, Pierian Maids!
 "Hear me propitious. In the morn of life,
 "When hope shone bright and all the prospect smil'd;
 "To your sequester'd mansion oft' my steps
 "Were turn'd, O Muses! and within your gate
 "My off'rings paid. Ye taught me then with strains
 "Of flowing harmony to soften War's
 "Dire voice, or in fair colours that might charm
 "The publick eye to clothe the form austere
 "Of civil counsel. Now my feeble age
 "Neglected, and supplanted of the hope
 "On which it lean'd, yet sinks not, but to you,
 "To your mild wisdom, flies, refuge below'd
 "Of solitude and silence. Ye can teach
 "The visions of my bed whate'er the gods
 "In the rude ages of the world inspir'd,
 "Or the first heroes acted; ye can make
 "The morning light more glad some to my sense
 "Than ever it appear'd to active youth
 "Pursuing careless pleasure; ye can give
 "To this long leisure, these unheeded hours,
 "A labour as sublime as when the sons
 "Of Athens throng'd and speechless round me stood

- “ To hear pronounc’d for all their future deeds
“ The bounds of right and wrong. Celestial Pow’rs!
“ I feel that ye are near me; and behold 370
“ To meet your energy divine I bring
“ A high and sacred theme, not less than those
“ Which to th’ eternal custody of Fame
“ Your lips intrusted, when of old ye deign’d
“ With Orpheus or with Homer to frequent 375
“ The groves of Hemus or the Chian shore.
“ Ye know, harmonious Maids! (for what of all
“ My various life was e’er from you estrang’d?)
“ Oft’ hath my solitary song to you
“ Reveal’d that duteous pride which turn’d my steps
“ To willing exile, earnest to withdraw 381
“ From envy and the disappointed thirst
“ Of lucre, left the bold familiar strife
“ Which in the eye of Athens they upheld
“ Against her legislator should impair 385
“ With trivial doubt the rev’rence of his laws:
“ To Egypt therefore thro’ th’ Ægean isles
“ My course I steer’d, and by the banks of Nile
“ Dwelt in Canopus: thence the hallow’d domes
“ Of Sais, and the rites to Isis paid, 390
“ I sought, and in her temple’s silent courts
“ Thro’ many changing moons attentive heard
“ The venerable Sonchis, while his tongue
“ At morn or midnight the deep story told
“ Of her who represents whate’er has been, 395

“ Or is, or shall be, whose mysterious veil
“ No mortal hand hath ever yet remov’d.
“ By him exhorted southward to the walls
“ Of On I pass’d, the city of the Sun,
“ The ever youthful god : ’t was there amid 400
“ His priests and sages, who the livelong night
“ Watch the dread movements of the starry sphere,
“ Or who in wondrous fables half disclose
“ The secrets of the elements, it was there
“ That great Psenophis taught my raptur’d ears 405
“ The fame of old Atlantis, of her chiefs,
“ And her pure laws, the first which earth obey’d.
“ Deep in my bosom sunk the noble tale,
“ And often while I listen’d did my mind
“ Foretell with what delight her own free lyre 410
“ Should some time for an Attick audience raise
“ Anew that lofty scene, and from their tombs
“ Call forth those ancient demigods to speak
“ Of justice and the hidden providence
“ That walks among mankind. But yet mean-time
“ The mystick pomp of Ammon’s gloomy sons 416
“ Became less pleasing : with contempt I gaz’d
“ On that tame garb and those unvarying paths
“ To which the double yoke of king and priest
“ Had cramp’d the sullen race. At last with hymns
“ Invoking our own Pallas and the gods 427
“ Of cheerful Greece, a glad farewell I gave
“ To Egypt, and before the southern wind
“ Spread my full sails. What climes I then survey’d,

“ What fortunes I encounter’d in the realm 425
“ Of Cræsus, or upon the Cyprian shore,
“ The Muse who prompts my bosom doth not now
“ Consent that I reveal. But when at length
“ Ten times the sun returning from the south
“ Had strow’d with flow’rs the verdant earth, and fill’d
“ The groves with musick, pleas’d I then beheld 431
“ The term of those long errors drawing nigh.
“ Nor yet, I said, will I sit down within
“ The walls of Athens till my feet have trod
“ The Cretan soil, have pierc’d those rev’rend haunts
“ Whence Law and civil Concord issu’d forth 436
“ As from their ancient home, and still to Greece
“ Their wisest lostiest discipline proclaim.
“ Straight where Amnisus, mart of wealthy ships,
“ Appears beneath sam’d Gnoffus and her tow’rs,
“ Like the fair handmaid of a stately queen, 441
“ I check’d my prow, and thence with eager steps
“ The city of Minos enter’d. O ye Gods!
“ Who taught the leaders of the simpler time
“ By written words to curb the untow’rd will 445
“ Of mortals, how within that gen’rous isle
“ Have ye the triumphs of your pow’r display’d
“ Munificent! Those splendid merchants, lords
“ Of traffick and the sea, with what delight
“ I saw them at their publick meal, like sons 450
“ Of the same household, join the plainer sort,
“ Whose wealth was only freedom! whence to these

“ Vile envy and to those fantastick pride
“ Alike was strange, but noble concord still
“ Cherish’d the strength untam’d, the rustick faith,
“ Of their first fathers. Then the growing race 456
“ How pleasing to behold them in their schools,
“ Their sports, their labours, ever plac’d within
“ O shade of Minos! thy controlling eye?
“ Here was a docile band in tuneful tones 460
“ Thy laws pronouncing, or with lofty hymns
“ Praising the bounteous gods, or to preserve
“ Their country’s heroes from oblivious night
“ Resounding what the Muse inspir’d of old :
“ There on the verge of manhood others met 465
“ In heavy armour thro’ the heats of noon
“ To march, the rugged mountain’s height to climb
“ With measur’d swiftness, from the hardbent bow
“ To send resistless arrows to their mark,
“ Or for the fame of prowess to contend, 470
“ Now wrestling, now with fists and staves oppos’d,
“ Now with the biting falchion, and the fence
“ Of brazen shields, while still the warbling flute
“ Presided o’er the combat, breathing strains
“ Grave, solemn, soft, and changing headlong spite
“ To thoughtful resolution cool and clear. 476
“ Such I beheld those islanders renown’d,
“ So tutor’d from their birth to meet in war
“ Each bold invader, and in peace to guard
“ That living flame of rev’rence for their laws 480
“ Which nor the storms of Fortune nor the flood

" Of foreign wealth diffus'd o'er all the land
 " Could quench or slacken. First of human names
 " In ev'ry Cretan's heart was Minos still,
 " And holiest far of what the sun surveys 485
 " Thro' his whole course were those primeval seats
 " Which with religious footsteps he had taught
 " Their fires t' approach, the wild Dictæan cave
 " Where Jove was born, the ever verdant meads
 " Of Ida, and the spacious grotto where 490
 " His active youth he pass'd, and where his throne
 " Yet stands mysterious, whither Minos came
 " Each ninth returning year the king of gods
 " And mortals there in secret to consult
 " On justice, and the tables of his law 495
 " T' inscribe anew: oft' also with like zeal,
 " Great Rhea's mansion from the Gnoslian gates
 " Men visit, nor less oft' the antick fane
 " Built on that sacred spot along the banks
 " Of shady Theron where benignant Jove 500
 " And his majestick consort join'd their hands
 " And spoke their nuptial vows. Alas! it was there
 " That the dire fate of Athens sunk in bonds
 " I first receiv'd, what time an annual feast
 " Had summon'd all the genial country round 505
 " By sacrifice and pomp to bring to mind
 " That first great spousal, while th' enamour'd youths
 " And virgins with the priest before the shrine
 " Observe the same pure ritual, and invoke 509
 " The same glad omens. There among the crowd
 " Of strangers from those naval cities drawn

" Which deck like gems the island's northern shore
 " A merchant of Ægina I descry'd,
 " My ancient host; but forward as I sprung
 " To meet him he with dark dejected brow 515
 " Stopp'd half averse; and " O Athenian guest!"
 " He said, " art thou in Crete these joyful rites
 " Partaking? Know thy laws are blotted out;
 " Thy Country kneels before a tyrant's throne."
 " He added names of men, with hostile deeds 520
 " Disastrous, which obscure and indistinct
 " I heard, for while he spake my heart grew cold
 " And my eyes dim; the altars and their train
 " No more were present to me: how I far'd
 " Or whither turn'd I know not, nor recall 525
 " Aught of those moments other than the sense
 " Of one who struggles in oppressive sleep,
 " And from the toils of some distressful dream
 " To break away, with palpitating heart, 529
 " Weak limbs, and temples bath'd in deathlike dew,
 " Makes many a painful effort. When at last
 " The sun and Nature's face again appear'd
 " Not far I found me, where the publick path
 " Winding thro' cypress groves and swelling meads
 " From Gnoſſus to the cave of Jove ascends: 535
 " Heedless I follow'd on till soon the skirts
 " Of Ida rose before me, and the vault
 " Wide-op'ning pierc'd the mountain's rocky side.
 " Ent'ring within the threshold on the ground
 " I flung me, sad, faint, overworn with toil. 540

* * * * *

THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE
PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

MDCCLXX.

ONE effort more, one cheerful sally more,
Our destin'd course will finish; and in peace
Then for an off'ring sacred to the pow'rs
Who lent us gracious guidance we will then
Inscribe a monument of deathless praise;
O my advent'rous Song! With steady speed
Long hast thou, on an untry'd voyage bound,
Sail'd between earth and heav'n; hast now survey'd
Stretch'd out beneath thee all the mazy tracks
Of passion and opinion, like a waste
Of sands, and flow'ry lawns, and tangling woods,
Where mortals roam bewilder'd; and hast now
Exulting soar'd among the worlds above,
Or hover'd near th' eternal gates of heav'n,
If haply the discourses of the gods
A curious but an unpresuming guest
Thou might'st partake, and carry back some strain
Of divine wisdom lawful to repeat
And apt to be conceiv'd of man below.
A diff'rent task remains, the secret paths
Of early genius to explore, to trace
Those haunts where Fancy her predestin'd sons,
Like to the demigods of old, doth nurse
Remote from eyes profane. Ye happy Souls!

Who now her tender discipline obey, 25
Where dwell ye? what wild river's brink at eve
Imprint your steps? what solemn groves at noon
Use ye to visit, often breaking forth
In rapture 'mid your dilatory walk,
Or musing as in slumber on the green? 30
—Would I again were with you!—O ye Dales
Of Tyne! and ye most ancient Woodlands! where
Oft' as the giant flood obliquely strides
And his banks open and his lawns extend
Stops short the pleased traveller to view 35
Presiding o'er the scene some rustick tow'r
Founded by Norman or by Saxon hands;
O ye Northumbrian Shades! which overlook
The rocky pavement and the mossy falls
Of solitary Wensbeck's limpid stream, 40
How gladly I recall your wellknown seats
Belov'd of old, and that delightful time
When all alone for many a summer's day
I wander'd thro' your calm recesses, led
In silence by some pow'rful hand unseen. 45
Nor will I e'er forget you; nor shall e'er
The graver tasks of manhood or th' advice
Of vulgar wisdom move me to disclaim
Those studies which possess'd me in the dawn
Of life, and fix'd the colour of my mind 50
For ev'ry future year; whence even now
From sleep I rescue the clear hours of morn,

And while the world around lies overwhelm'd
In idle darkness am alive to thoughts
Of honourable fame, of truth divine 55
Or moral, and of minds to virtue won
By the sweet magick of harmonious verse,
The themes which now expect us. For thus far
On gen'ral habits, and on arts which grow
Spontaneous in the minds of all mankind, 60
Hath dwelt our argument; and how selftaught,
'Tho' seldom conscious of their own employ,
In Nature's or in Fortune's changeful scene
Men learn to judge of beauty, and acquire
'Those forms set up as idols in the soul 65
For love and zealous praise. Yet indistinct
In vulgar bosoms and unnotic'd lie
These pleasing stores, unless the casual force
Of things external prompt the heedless mind
To recognize her wealth. But some there are 70
Conscious of Nature and the rule which man
O'er Nature holds; some who within themselves
Retiring from the trivial scenes of chance
And momentary passion can at will
Call up these fair exemplars of the mind, 75
Review their features, scan the secret laws
Which bind them to each other, and display
By forms, or sounds, or colours, to the sense
Of all the world, their latent charms display;
Ev'n as in Nature's frame (if such a word, 80
If such a word, so bold, may from the lips

Of man proceed) as in this outward frame
Of things the Great Artificer portrays
His own immense idea. Various names
These among mortals bear, as various signs 85
They use, and by peculiar organs speak
To human sense. There are who by the sight
Of air thro' tubes with moving stops distinct,
Or by extended chords in measure taught
To vibrate, can assemble pow'rful sounds 90
Expressing ev'ry temper of the mind
From ev'ry cause, and charming all the soul
With passion void of care: others mean-time
The rugged mass of metal, wood, or stone,
Patiently taming, or with easier hand 95
Describing lines, and with more ample scope
Uniting colours, can to gen'ral sight
Produce those permanent and perfect forms,
Those characters of heroes and of gods,
Which from the crude materials of the world 100
Their own high minds created. But the chief
Are poets, eloquent men, who dwell on earth
To clothe whate'er the soul admires or loves
With language and with numbers: hence to these
A field is open'd wide as Nature's sphere, 105
Nay wider; various as the sudden acts
Of human wit, and vast as the demands
Of human will. The bard nor length, nor depth,
Nor place, nor form, controls. To eyes, to ears,
To ev'ry organ of the copious mind, 110

He offereth all its treasures. Him the hours,
The seasons him, obey; and changeful Time
Sees him at will keep measure with his flight,
At will outstrip it. To enhance his toil
He summoneth from th' uttermost extent 115
Of things which God hath taught him ev'ry form
Auxiliar, ev'ry pow'r, and all beside
Excludes imperions. His prevailing hand
Gives to corporeal essence life and sense,
And ev'ry stately function of the soul. 120
The soul itself to him obsequious lies,
Like matter's passive heap, and as he wills
To reason and affection he assigns
Their just alliances, their just degrees;
Whence his peculiar honours, whence the race 125
Of men who people his delightful world,
Men genuine and according to themselves,
Transcend as far th' uncertain sons of earth
As earth itself to his delightful world
The palm of spotless beauty doth resign. 130

* * * * *



CONTENTS.

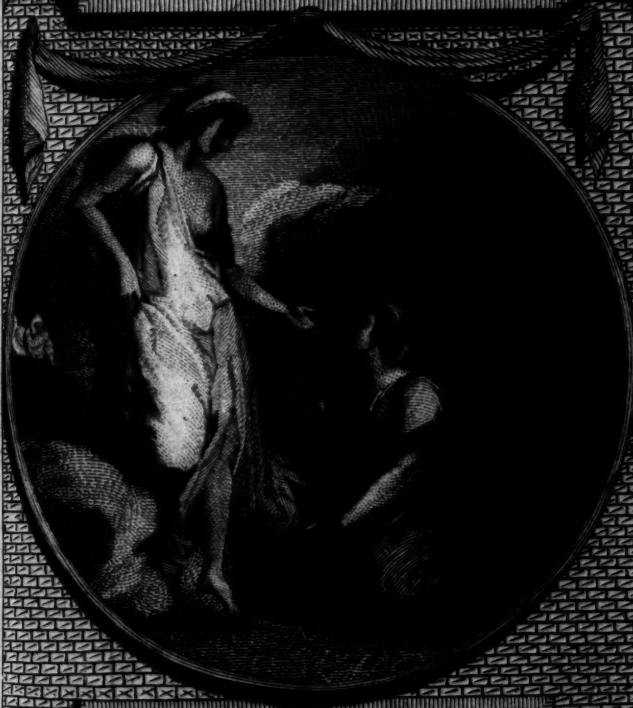
	Page
The Life of the Author,	5
Advertisement,	17
The Design,	20
The Pleasures of Imagination, Book I.	25
————— Book II.	51
————— Book III.	83
General Argument to The Pleasures of Imagination enlarged,	114
The Pleasures of Imagination enlarged, Book I.	116
————— Book II.	143
————— Book III.	168
Beginning of ————— Book IV.	187

From the APOLLO PRESS,
by the MARTINS,
Nov. 3. 1781.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.



BELL'S EDITION
The POETS of GREAT BRITAIN
COMPLETE, FROM
CHAUCER to CHURCHILL.



AMERICAN VOL. II.
Which supplies, in words, the reader's want of
any other text.

